



## LESSON 3.1.0 | OVERVIEW

Evading bandits through mountain passes, leading a caravan of yaks carrying silk and goods, sailing the trade winds off the Indian coastline – these are a few things you might have done as a trader in the age of agrarian civilizations. Systems of exchange and trade between large agrarian civilizations facilitated the transfer of goods from one civilization to the next, but they also help share the world's religions, ideas, innovations, diseases, and people. In this lesson you will explore the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean Trade, and begin to understand how networks of exchange and trade impacted the world. In addition, you will examine how particular representations of historical information can change the importance and meaning of that information.



## LESSON 3.1.1 | OPENING | EQ Notebook

### PURPOSE

Each unit of the Crash Course World History (CCWH) course is guided by an Essential Question (EQ).

You're learning a ton of stuff in this and every other unit, and it can be hard to keep track of what's most important. It would be pretty easy to become obsessed with a detail that, although interesting and a great way to impress people at a party is relatively unimportant. This activity will help you stay focused!

You'll think about the unit's Essential Question, and then you'll respond to it in writing. By journaling these questions and responses, you'll see how much you've learned as you move through each section of the course.

### ATTACHMENT

- Essential Questions Unit 3 Notebook Worksheet

### DIRECTIONS

Think about this question: How does trade affect culture?

Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 3 – Worksheet to respond to this question as best as you can. Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.



## UNIT 3 | EQ NOTEBOOK WORKSHEET

Answer the unit essential Lessons 3.1.1, then again in Lessons 3.4.8. In your answer, be sure to include ideas such as historical context and how themes through history change over time. Use specific examples to support your claims or ideas.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** | How does trade affect culture?

LESSON 3.1.1	
LESSON 3.4.8	
HOW HAS YOUR THINKING CHANGED?	



## LESSON 3.1.2 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #9 The Silk Road and Ancient Trade

### PURPOSE

In this video, you will start to learn about different trade routes. This helps you to begin understand how networks of trade operated in the past, how they operate today, and how trade leads to a spread of ideas, religions, languages, and culture.

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### LINK

- [The Silk Road and Ancient Trade – Crash Course World History #9](#)

### PREVIEW

In which John Green discusses the so-called Silk Road, which was not a road nor made of silk. It was actually a network of trade routes where goods such as such as ivory, silver, iron, wine, and yes, silk were exchanged across the ancient world, from China to the West. Along with all these consumer goods, things like disease and ideas made the trip as well. As is his custom, John ties the Silk Road to modern life, and the ways that we get our stuff today.

### PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider how the Silk Road changed the world. What long-term impact has it had on humanity and the planet?



## LESSON 3.1.2 | VIDEO | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. What was the Silk Road if not a road made of silk?
2. Why did China keep the process of silk making secret and for what purposes did they use silk?
3. What was traded along these routes?
4. How did the Silk Road help the people of Central Asia?
5. How did trade on the Silk Road lead to the formation of new cities?



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COURSE \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did the Roman government try to ban the importation of silk?

7. How did the Silk Road change the social and political hierarchy of some areas (like Rome)?

8. How did the Silk Road change the lives of ordinary people?

9. What types of diseases spread along the Silk Road?



## LESSON 3.1.2 | VIDEO | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following questions to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. How could you compare the wealth and influence of the merchant class in Rome with how businesses of today attempt to influence politics and government?

2. How did the Silk Road help Europeans conquer the Americas so quickly?



## LESSON 3.1.3 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #18 Int'l Commerce, Snorkeling Camels, and the Indian Ocean Trade

### PURPOSE

In this video, you will continue to learn about trade, with a focus on how trade routes are systems that not only spread goods, but also technology and ideas. In addition, you learn that even though the Silk Road may be one of the most well-known trade routes, it's actually much smaller than the trade routes talked about in this video, showing that the ways in which history is presented can influence people's perceptions of what's historically most important.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #18 – Int'l Commerce, Snorkeling Camels, and The Indian Ocean Trade](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### PREVIEW

In which John Green discusses the history of the Indian Ocean Trade. John weaves a tale of swashbuckling adventure, replete with trade in books, ivory, and timber. Along the way, John manages to cover advances in sea-faring technology, just how the monsoons work, and there's even a disembowelment for you Fangoria fans.

### PROCESS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider differences between cross-country trade and exchange versus trade via water routes. How did trade in the Indian Ocean accelerate human connectedness?



## LESSON 3.1.3 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. How does the trade throughout the Indian Ocean differ from that along the Silk Road?

2. When was the height of the Indian Ocean trade and who was involved in the trade?

3. What are some of the reasons the Indian Ocean trade took off and was so popular?

4. In what ways did monsoons assist and determine trade?

5. Who dominated trade in this region? How was this possible?



6. How were terms of trade determined and by whom?

7. What are some additional examples of how the Indian Ocean trade was different from the Silk Road?

8. In addition to goods, what else was shared throughout the trade routes of the Indian Ocean?  
What are some examples?

9. How did trade in the Indian Ocean determine the geography and demographics of the region?

10. How are merchant centers throughout the region further influenced by trade?



COURSE \_\_\_\_\_

2. Consider an item you own (an article of clothing, cell phone, shoes, etc.): Where do you think it is manufactured and by what means has it arrived in your possession?



## LESSON 3.1.4 | READ | Local Markets, Regional Trade, and Trans-Hemispheric Networks — World History For Us All — Sharon Cohen & Susan Douglass

### PURPOSE

In these readings, you will learn more about trade and trade routes in Afro-Eurasia. This not only deepens your understanding of trade routes around the world, but also gives you an opportunity to use primary resources to try to construct a narrative about the past, much like historians do. In particular, these readings give you the opportunity to infer ways in which trade affects local of life, architecture, and organization of cities, markets, and regions.

### SOURCE

- [Local Markets, Regional Trade, and Trans-Hemispheric Networks](#)

### ATTACHMENTS

- Post Classical Era Travel Accounts Handout
- Local Markets, Regional Trade, and Trans-Hemispheric Networks Compare/Contrast Chart Worksheet

### PROCESS

In this activity you are going to read primary source documents that are travel accounts that were written between the eighth and fourteenth centuries CE. The documents contain information about marketplaces, products, and customs associated with commerce during those times. Looking at these documents should help you draw conclusions about how trade affects local ways of life, architecture, and the organization of cities, markets, and regions.

Your teacher will assign you and a partner an excerpt to read. As you read it, write down the following information and be prepared to present this information to the class:

- Name of the traveler
- Time period of the traveler
- Each item of trade
- Each mode of transportation
- Any customs related to trade
- Any facilities specifically used for trade.

- Any observations that the traveler made that indicate how trade affects the place in general (this may include evidence of wealth, high standards of living, or patronage of learning).

As each group presents, fill out the compare and contrast worksheet, paying attention to the following elements in relation to the places you and your class-mates described: how large or small they seem, where they are in relation to cities, whether they are a seat of government, what relationship they have to pastoral herding peoples, and other geographical factors.

Once everyone's presented and you're done filling out the worksheet, think about the reliability of the documents and whether or not they were useful for discovering significant patterns in history. If they were useful, how and why were they useful? If they weren't useful, why not, and what could make them more useful?



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts: Excerpt from Ibn Fadlan: Observations on the Vikings and Russians (Tenth Century)

### BACKGROUND

In the year 921 CE, Ibn Fadlan set out with a party on a journey from Baghdad to the north as ambassadors of the Abbasid Caliph (Khalifa) al-Muqtadir (908-932 CE) to the King of the Slavs, in the cold, forested land of long rivers that is now northern Russia. The Caliph had received a letter from that king, asking him to send someone who could teach them about Islam, along with funds to help build a masjid (mosque). The head of the expedition was Nadir al-Harami, a scholar. Ibn Fadlan was to be the secretary. What brought these groups, who lived about 1,500 miles apart, in contact was the network of trade routes that ran from the northern forests and arctic sea coasts down the great Dneiper and Volga rivers to the Black and Caspian Seas. Along these routes, Viking ships carried amber, furs, honey, and handicrafts, trading these goods for textiles, pottery, spices, metal, and glassware from Muslim and Byzantine lands. Owing to this trade, many Arabic coins have been found in archaeological sites in Scandinavia. Vikings traded and settled in these lands. They and their descendants intermarried with Slavic- and Turkic- speaking communities, producing the population that became known as the Rus (from which we get the word Russia). The knowledge that Ibn Fadlan gathered during his journey sheds light on those lands. Aside from his text, most of what we know about Rus society in the tenth century comes from graves or other archaeological finds.

"I saw the Rus as they arrived with their wares and camped on the banks of the River Itil [the Volga]. I had never seen people of such tall stature — they are as tall as palm trees, blond, and ruddy of complexion. They do not wear shirts or caftans[robes]. Their custom is to wear a length of coarse cloth that they wrap around their sides and throw over the

shoulder so that one arm remains bare. Each of them carries with him an ax, a dagger and a sword. They are never seen without these weapons. Their swords are broad with wavy stripes on the blade, and of Frankish [European] manufacture. On one side, from the point to the handle, it is covered with figures and trees and other decorations. The women fasten to their bodice a locket of iron, copper, silver or gold, according to the wealth and position of her husband. On the locket is a ring, and on that is a knife, also fastened to the front of their bodice. They wear silver and gold chains around their necks. If the man possesses ten thousand dirhams [silver coins], he has a chain made for his wife; and if he has twenty thousand, she gets two necklaces; and so she receives one more each time he becomes ten thousand richer. In this way the Rus woman acquires a great number of necklaces. Their most valued jewelry consists of green glass beads like the kind found on the ships. They exaggerate in this, paying a dirham for one such bead and stringing them into necklaces for their women...

They come out of their country, anchor their ships in the Itil, which is a great river, and build great wooden houses on its banks. Ten or twenty, more or less, live in such a house together. Each of them has a bed or bench on which he and his women sit, as well as the beauties determined for sale...

As soon as their ships arrive at anchorage, each of them goes on land with his bread, meat, onions, milk and intoxicating drink with him, and betakes himself to a high, upright wooden post carved with the face of a human and surrounded by small statues, behind which other posts are standing. He goes up to the highest of the wooden figures, throws himself prostrate on



the ground in front of it and speaks: 'O my Lord! I am come from a faraway land, and bring with me so-and-so many maids, and of sable furs so-and-so many skins'; and when he has named in this way all of the trade goods he brought with him, he continues: 'I have brought you this offering'; and lays down at the feet of the wooden statue what he has brought and says: 'I wish that you bless me with a buyer who has plenty of gold and silver pieces, who buys all that I desire him to buy, and meets all of my demands.' Having said this, he then goes away. If his trade goes poorly and his stay drags on too long, then he returns bringing a second, and sometimes a third offering [to the statue]. If he still experiences difficulty in fulfilling his wishes [or getting what he wants], then he brings each of the small statues an offering, and asks for intercession, saying: 'These are the sons and daughters of our Lord.' And so he continues, going up to each individual statue, pleading for intercession, bowing himself humbly before it. After that, perhaps his trade goes well and easily, and he sells all of the wares he has brought..."

*Sources:*

*Cohen, Susan and Susan Douglass. "Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity 300-1500 CE. Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks 1000 – 1250 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*Excerpted from Mujam al Buldan, or Compendium of Countries (10th century CE), in Beyond A Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 147-148.*



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts Handout: The Travels of Ibn Jubayr (Twelfth Century)

### BACKGROUND

Ibn Jubayr was a scholar and resident of al-Andalus, or Muslim Spain, during the twelfth century CE. His journey was the result of an unfortunate incident at the court of the ruler. It seems that to make a joke, the ruler forced the pious Ibn Jubayr to taste an alcoholic beverage. Ibn Jubayr was so disturbed by this that the ruler regretted his actions. To make up for the outrage, he gave Ibn Jubayr a quantity of gold. The scholar in turn determined to atone for his sin of weakness by using the money to make the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca (Makkah). He did that and also made a tour of several other places around the Mediterranean. His travel account is especially interesting because he was an excellent observer of his times.

### BAGHDAD

We now return to our description of Baghdad...As we have said, this city has two parts, an eastern and a western, and the Tigris passes between them. Its western part is wholly overcome by ruin. It was the first part to be populated, and the eastern part was but recently inhabited. Nevertheless, despite the ruins, it contains seventeen quarters, each quarter being a separate town. Each has two or three baths, and in eight of them is a congregational mosque where the Friday prayers are said. The largest of these quarters is al-Qurayah, where we lodged in a part called al-Murabba (the Square) on the banks of the Tigris and near to the bridge. This bridge had been carried away by the river in its flood, and the people had turned to crossing by boats. These boats were beyond count; the people, men and women, who night and day continuously cross in recreation are likewise numberless. Ordinarily, and because of the many people, the river had two bridges, one near the palaces of the

Caliph, and the other above it. The crossings in the boats are now ceaseless.

Then (comes the quarter of) al-Karkh, a noted city, then that of Bab al-Basrah (the Basra Gate), which also is a suburb and has in it the mosque of al-Mansur — may God hold him in His favor. It is a large mosque, anciently built, and embellished. Next is (the quarter) al-Shari, also a city. These are the four largest quarters. Between the al-Shari and Bab al-Basrah quarters is the Suq al-Maristan (the Market of the Hospital), which itself is a small city and contains the famous Baghdad Hospital. It is on the Tigris, and every Monday and Thursday physicians visit it to examine the state of the sick, and to prescribe for them what they might need. At their disposal are persons who undertake the preparation of the foods and medicines. The hospital is a large palace, with chambers and closets and all the appurtenances of a royal dwelling. Water comes into it from the Tigris. It would take long to name the other quarters, like al-Wasitah, which lies between the Tigris and a canal which branches off the Euphrates and flows into the Tigris and on which is brought all the produce of the parts watered by the Euphrates. Another canal passes by Bab al-Basrah, whose quarter we have already mentioned, and flows as well into the Tigris...

Another quarter is that called al-Attabiyah, where are made the clothes from which it takes its name, they being of silk and cotton in various colors. Then comes al-Harbiyyah, which is the highest (on the river bank) and beyond which is nothing but the villages outside Baghdad. Other quarters there are that it would take too long to mention...



The eastern part of the city has magnificent markets, is arranged on a grand scale and enfolds a population that none could count save God Most High, who computes all things. It has three congregational mosques, in all of which the Friday prayers are said. The Caliph's mosque, which adjoins the palace, is vast and has large water containers and many and excellent conveniences — conveniences, that is, for the ritual ablutions and cleansing. The Mosque of the Sultan is outside the city, and adjoins the palaces also named after the Sultan known as the Shah-in Shah. He had been the controller of the affairs of the ancestors of this Caliph and had lived there, and the mosque had been built in front of his residence. The (third) mosque, that of al-Rusafah, is in the eastern part, and between it and the mosque of the Sultan lies about a mile. In al-Rusafah is the sepulchre of the Abbasid Caliphs — may God's mercy rest upon their souls. The full number of congregational mosques in Baghdad, where Friday prayers are said, is eleven...

The baths in the city cannot be counted, but one of the town's shaykhs told us that, in the eastern and western parts together, there are about two thousand. Most of them are faced with bitumen, so that the beholder might conceive them to be of black, polished marble; and almost all the baths of these parts are of this type because of the large amount of bitumen they have. ... The (ordinary) mosques in both the eastern and the western parts cannot be estimated, much less counted. The colleges are about thirty, and all in the eastern part; and there is not one of them that does not out-do the finest palace. The greatest and most famous of them is the Nizamiyah, which was built by Nizam al-Mulk and restored in 504 [hijri, or Islamic dating system]. These colleges have large endowments and tied properties that give sustenance to the faqihs (legal scholars) who teach in them, and are dispensed on the scholars. A great honor and an everlasting glory to the land are these colleges and

hospitals. God's mercy on him who first erected them, and on those who followed in that pious path.

## ALEPPO

As for the town, it is massively built and wonderfully disposed, and of rare beauty, with large markets arranged in long adjacent rows so that you pass from a row of shops of one craft into that of another until you have gone through all the urban industries. These markets are all roofed with wood, so that their occupants enjoy an ample shade, and all hold the gaze from their beauty, and halt in wonder those who are hurrying by. Its qaysariyah (market for luxury goods) is as a walled-in garden in its freshness and beauty, flanked, as it is, by the venerated mosque. He who sits in it yearns for no other sight even were it paradisaical. Most of the shops are in wooden warehouses of excellent workmanship, a row being formed of one warehouse divided by wooden railings richly carved that all open on (separate) shops. The result is most beautiful. Each row is connected with one of the gates of the venerated mosque. This is one of the finest and most beautiful of mosques. Its great court is surrounded by large and spacious porticos that are full of doors, beautiful as those of a palace, that open on to the court. Their number is more than fifty, and they hold the gaze from their fine aspect. In the court there are two wells fed by springs. The south portico has no maqsurah (private space for the ruler), so that its amplitude is manifest and most pleasing to look upon. The art of ornamental carving had exhausted itself in its endeavors on the pulpit, for never in any city have I seen a pulpit like it or of such wondrous workmanship. The woodwork stretches from it to the mihrab (prayer niche), beautifully adorning all its sides in the same marvelous fashion. It rises up, like a great crown, over the mihrab, and then climbs until it reaches the heights of the roof. The upper part of the mosque is in the form of an arch furnished with wooden merlons, superbly carved and all inlaid with



ivory and ebony. This marquetry extends from the pulpit to the mihrab and to that part of the south wall which they adjoin without any interval appearing, and the eyes consider the most beautiful sight in the world. The splendor of this venerated mosque is greater than can be described. At its west side stands a Hanafite college which resembles the mosque in beauty and perfection of work. Indeed in beauty they are like one mausoleum beside another. This school is one of the most ornamental we have seen, both in construction and in its rare workmanship. One of the most graceful things we saw was the south side, filled with chambers and upper rooms, whose windows touched each other, and having, along its length, a pergola covered with grape-bearing vines. Each window had bunches of grapes that hung before it, and each occupant could, by leaning forward, stretch forth his arm and pluck the fruit without pain or trouble.

*Sources:*

*Cohen, Susan and Susan Douglass. "Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity 300-1500 CE. Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks 1000 – 1250 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*Excerpted from Beyond A Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 160-163.*

Besides this college the city has four or five others, and a hospital. Its state of splendor is superb, and it is a city fit to be the seat of the Caliph. But its magnificence is all within, and it has nothing on the outside save a small river that flows from north to south and passes through the suburb that surrounds the city; for it has a large suburb containing numerable khans. On this river there are mills contiguous with the town, and in the middle of the suburb are gardens that stretch along its length. But whatever may be its state, inside or out, Aleppo is one of the cities of the world that have no like, and that would take long to describe. We lodged in its suburb, in a khan [hotel] called the "Khan of Abu al-Shukr", where we stayed four days."



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts Handout: From Marco Polo, The Travels (13th Century)

### BACKGROUND

Marco Polo was born in 1254 to a Venetian merchant family. In 1271, he joined his father for a journey to China, which his father had already visited once. The two spent the next twenty years on travels in the service of Kublai Khan, the Mongol ruler of China. They returned to Italy in 1292. Imprisoned in 1298, Marco met a romance writer named Rusticello, who helped Marco write an account of his travels to China.

"On the banks of a great river in the province of Cathay there stood an ancient city of great size and splendor which was named Khan-balik, that is to say in our language "the Lord's City" [Beijing]. Now the Great Khan...had a new city built next to the old one, with only the river in between. And he removed the inhabitants of the old city and settled them in the new one...Taidu is built in the form of a square with all its sides of equal length and a total circumference of twenty-four miles...The city is full of fine mansions, inns and dwelling-houses. All the way down the sides of every main street there are booths and shops of every sort...In this city there is such a multitude of houses and of people, both within and without, that no one could count their number. Actually, there are more people outside the walls in the suburbs than in the city itself. There is a suburb outside every gate, such that one touches the neighboring suburbs on either side. They extend in length for three or four miles. And in every suburb or ward, at about a mile's distance from the city, there are many fine hostels which provide lodging for merchants coming from different parts; a particular hostel is assigned to every nation...Merchants and others come here on business in great numbers, both because it is the Khan's residence and because it affords a profitable market. And the suburbs have

as fine houses and mansions as the city, except of course for the Khan's palace...

You may take it for a fact that more precious and costly wares are imported into Khan-balik than into any other city in the world. Let me give you particulars. All the treasures that come from India – precious stones, pearls, and other rarities – are brought here. So too are the choicest products of Cathay itself and every other province. This is on account of the Great Khan himself, who lives here, and of the lords and ladies and the enormous multitude of hotel-keepers and other residents and of visitors who attend the courts held here by the Khan. That is why the volume and value of the imports and of the internal trade exceed those of any other city in the world. It is a fact that every day more than 1,000 cart-loads of silk is woven here. So it is not surprising that it is the center of such traffic as I have described...

It is in this city of Khan-balik that the Great Khan has his mint; and it is so organized that you might well say he has mastered the art of alchemy. I will demonstrate this to you here and now.

You must know that he has money made for him by the following process, out of the bark of trees—to be precise, from mulberry trees (the same whose leaves furnish food for silk-worms). The fine bast between the bark and the wood of the tree is stripped off. Then it is crumbled and pounded and flattened out with the aid of glue into sheets of cotton paper, which are all black. When they are made, they are cut up into rectangles of various sizes, longer than they are broad. The smallest is worth half a small tornesel (a small coin); the next an entire such tornesel; the next half



a silver groat; the next an entire silver groat, equal in value to a silver groat of Venice; and there are others equivalent to two, five, and ten groats and one, three, and as many as ten gold bezants. And all these papers are sealed with the seal of the Great Khan. The procedure of issue is as formal and authoritative as if they were made of pure gold or silver. On each piece of money several specially appointed officials write their names, each setting his own stamp. When it is completed in due form, the chief of the officials deputed by the Khan dips in cinnabar the seal or bull assigned to him and stamps it on the top of the piece of money so that the shape of the seal in vermillion remains impressed upon it. And then the money is authentic. And if anyone were to forge it, he would suffer the extreme penalty.

Of this money the Khan has such quantity made that with it he could buy all the treasure in the world. With this currency he orders all payments to be made throughout every province and kingdom and region of his empire. And no one dares refuse it on pain of losing his life. And I assure you that all the peoples and populations who are subject to his rule are perfectly willing to accept these papers in payment, since wherever they go they pay in the same currency, whether for goods or for pearls or precious stones or gold or silver. With these pieces of paper they can buy anything and pay for anything. And I can tell you that the papers that reckon as ten bezants do not weigh one.

Several times a year parties of traders arrive with pearls and precious stones and gold and silver and other valuables, such as cloth of gold and silk, and surrender them all to the Great Khan. The Khan then summons twelve experts, who are chosen for the task and have special knowledge of it, and bids them examine the wares that the traders have brought and pay for them what they judge to be their true value. The twelve experts duly examine the wares

and pay the value in paper currency of which I have spoken. The traders accept it willingly because they can spend it afterwards on the various goods they buy throughout the Great Khan's dominions. And I give you my word that the wares brought in at different times during the year mount up to a value of fully 400,000 bezants, and they are all paid for in this paper currency.

Let me tell you further that several times a year a fiat goes forth through the towns that all those who have gems and pearls and gold and silver must bring them to the Great Khan's mint. This they do, and in such abundance that it is past all reckoning; and they are all paid in paper money...

Here is another fact well worth relating. When these papers have been so long in circulation that they are growing torn and frayed, they are brought to the mint and changed for new and fresh ones at a discount of 3 per cent. And here again... if a man wants to buy gold or silver to make his service of plate or his belts or other finery, he goes to the Khan's mint with some of these papers and gives them in payment for the gold and silver which he buys from the mint-master. And all the Khan's armies are paid with this sort of money.

I have now told you how it comes about that the Great Khan must have, as indeed he has, more treasure than anyone else in the world..."

*Quoted from Ronald Latham, translator, The Travels of Marco Polo (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 128-129, 130; 147-148, 149.*

*Source:*

*Cohen, Susan and Susan Douglass. "Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity 300-1500 CE. Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks 1000 – 1250 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts Handout: Excerpt from Chen Pu, A Record of Musings on the Eastern Capital of the Song Empire [Hangzhou] (Thirteenth Century)

### BACKGROUND

In the early twelfth century, people of the steppe overran northern China. They established a dynasty called the Jin (1115-1234), which built its capital city at Beijing. In response, the Song royal court moved south to the port city of Hangzhou near the Yangzi River. The Song ruled over what was left of their empire until the Mongols captured the city in 1276 and established another dynasty.

By the twelfth century, Hangzhou was more than just a center of government. By the thirteenth century, it had a population of more than one million people living in a city about eight square miles in size, one of the biggest and wealthiest cities in the world. The following excerpt is from the description of an anonymous traveler, who wrote it in 1235 to describe the city and its activities.

### MARKETS

"During the morning hours, markets extend from Tranquility Gate of the palace all the way to the north and south sides of the New Boulevard. Here we find pearl, jade, talismans, exotic plants and fruits, seasonal catches from the sea, wild game - all the rarities of the world seem to be gathered here. The food and commodity markets at the Heavenly-View Gate, River Market Place, Central Square, Ba Creek, the end of Superior Lane, Tent Place, and Universal Peace Bridge are all crowded and full of traffic.

In the evening, with the exception of the square in front of the palace, the markets are as busy as during the day. The most attractive one is at Central Square, where all sorts of exquisite artifacts, instruments, containers, and hundreds of varieties of goods are for sale. In other marketplaces, sales, auctions,

and exchanges go on constantly. In the wine shops and inns business also thrives. Only after the fourth drum does the city gradually quiet down, but by the fifth drum, court officials already start preparing for audiences and merchants are getting ready for the morning market again. This cycle goes on all year round without respite...

On the lot in front of the wall of the city building, there are always various acting troupes performing, and this usually attracts a large crowd. The same kind of activity is seen in almost any vacant lot, including those at the meat market of the Great Common, the herb market at Charcoal Bridge, the book market at Orange Grove, the vegetable market on the east side of the city, and the rice market on the north side. There are many more interesting markets, such as the candy center at the Five Buildings, but I cannot name them all.

### COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

In general, the capital attracts the greatest variety of goods and has the best craftsmen. For instance, the flower company at Superior Lane does a truly excellent job of flower arrangement, and its caps, hairpins, and collars are unsurpassed in craftsmanship. Some of the most famous specialties of the capital are the sweet-bean soup at the Miscellaneous Market, the pickled dates of the Ge family, the thick soup of the Guang family at Superior Lane, the fruit at the Great Commons marketplace, the cooked meats in front of Eternal Mercy Temple, Sister Song's fish broth at Penny Pond Gate, the juicy lungs at Flowing Gold Gate, the "lamb rice" of the Zhi family at Central Square, the boots of the Peng family, the fine clothing of the Xuan



family at Southern Commons, the sticky rice pastry of the Zhang family the flutes made by Gu the Fourth, and the Qiu family's Tatar whistles at the Great Commons.

## WINE SHOPS

Among the various kinds of wine shops, the tea-and-food shops sell not only wine, but also various foods to go with it. However, to get seasonal delicacies not available in these shops, one should go to the inns, for they also have a menu from which one can make selections. The pastry-and-wine shops sell pastries with duckling and goose fillings, various fixings of pig tripe, intestines and blood, fish fat and spawn; but they are rather expensive. The mansion-style inns are either decorated in the same way as officials' mansions or are actually remodeled from such mansions. The garden-style inns are often located in the suburbs, though some are also situated in town. Their decoration is usually an imitation of a studio-garden combination...

The expenses incurred on visiting an inn can vary widely. If you order food, but no drinks, it is called "having the lowly soup-and-stuff" and is quite inexpensive. If your order of wine and food falls within the range of 100-5,000 cash, it is called a small order. However, if you ask for female company, then it is most likely that the girls will order the most expensive delicacies. You are well advised to appear shrewd and experienced, so as not to be robbed. One trick, for instance, in ordering wines is to give a large order, of say, ten bottles, but open them one by one. In the end, you will probably have used only five or six bottles of the best. You can then return the rest...

## TEAHOUSES

In large teahouses there are usually paintings and calligraphies by famous artists on display. In the old capital, only restaurants had them, to enable their patrons

to while away the time as the food was being prepared, but now it is customary for teahouses as well to display paintings and the like...

Often many young men gather in teahouses to practice singing or playing musical instruments. To give such amateur performances is called "getting posted." A "social teahouse" is more of a community gathering place than a mere place that sells tea. Often tea-drinking is but an excuse, and people are rather generous when it comes to the tips...

## SPECIALTY STORES

The commercial area of the capital extends from the old Qing River Market to the Southern Commons on the south and to the border on the north. It includes the Central Square, which is also called the Center of Five Flowers. From the north side of the Five Buildings to South Imperial Boulevard, there are more than one hundred gold, silver, and money exchanges. On the short walls in front of these stores, there are piles of gold, silver, and copper cash: these are called "the money that watches over the store."

Around these exchanges there are also numerous gold and silversmiths. The pearl marts are situated between the north side of Cordial Marketplace and Southtown Marketplace. Most deals made here involve over 10,000 cash. A score of pawnshops are scattered in between, all owned by very wealthy people and dealing only in the most valuable objects.

Some famous fabric stores sell exquisite brocade and fine silk which are unsurpassed elsewhere in the country. Along the river, close to the Peaceful Ford Bridge, there are numerous fabric stores, fan shops, and lacquerware and porcelain shops. Most other cities can only boast of one special product; what makes the capital unique is that it gathers goods from all places. Furthermore, because of the large population and



busy commercial traffic, there is a demand for everything. There are even shops that deal exclusively in used paper or in feathers, for instance.

## WAREHOUSES

Today, having been the “temporary capital” for more than a hundred years, the city has over a million households. The suburbs extend to the south, west, and north; all are densely populated and prosperous in commerce as well as in agriculture. The size of the suburbs is comparable to a small county or prefecture, and it takes several days to travel through them. This again reflects the prosperity of the capital.

In the middle of the city, enclosed by the Northern Pass Dam, is White Ocean Lake. Its water spreads over several tens of li.5 Wealthy families have built scores of warehouse complexes along this waterfront. Each of these consists of several hundred to over a thousand rooms for the storage needs of the various businesses in the capital and of traveling merchants. Because these warehouses are surrounded by water, they are not endangered by fires or thieves, and therefore they offer a special convenience.”

*Source:*

*From E-Source 18: CHEN PU <http://www.bakeru.edu/faculty/jrichards/>*

*World%20Civ%20II/E-Sources/E19Hangzhou.htm*



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts: From Ibn Battuta, *The Rihlah* (Travels in East Africa, Fourteenth Century CE)

### BACKGROUND

Ibn Battuta was born in 1304 CE in Tangier, Morocco, to a family of legal scholars. He entered that profession as well, but in 1325, he decided to make the hajj (Islamic pilgrimage) to Mecca (Makkah). This began a remarkable journey that lasted nearly 30 years and covered thousands of miles. His journeys, extending as far north as the Volga River, as far South as the coast of East Africa, and as far east as China, demonstrated the amazing diversity and cosmopolitan unity of the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) during the fourteenth century. The *Rihlah*, the travel account that was prepared with the help of Ibn Juzayy in 1356, is an excellent historical and geographic source on the period.

"We sailed . . . for fifteen nights [from the horn of Africa] and came to Maqdashaw [Mogadishu], which is a town of enormous size. Its inhabitants are merchants, possessed of vast resources; they own large numbers of camel, of which they slaughter hundreds every day [for food], and also have quantities of sheep. In this place are manufactured the woven fabrics called after it, which are unequalled and exported from it to Egypt and elsewhere. It is the custom of the people of this town that, when a vessel reaches the anchorage, the sumbuqs, which are small boats, come out to it. In each sumbuq there are a number of young men of the town, each one of whom brings a covered platter containing food and presents it to one of the merchants on the ship saying 'This is my guest,' and each of the others does the same. The merchant, on disembarking, goes only to the house of his host among the young men, except those of them who have made frequent journeys

to the town and have gained some acquaintance with its inhabitants; these lodge where they please. When he takes up residence with his host, the latter sells his goods for and buys for him; and if anyone buys anything from him at too low a price or sells to him in the absence of his host, that sale is held invalid by them. This practice is profitable one for them.

### ACCOUNT OF THE SULTAN OF MAQDASHAW

The sultan of Maqdashaw is, as we have mentioned, called only by the title of 'the Shaykh'. His name is Abu Bakr, son of the shaykh Umar; he is by origin of the Barbara (Berbers) and he speaks in Maqdish, but knows the Arabic language. One of his customs is that, when a vessel arrives, the sultan's sumbuq (patrol ship) goes out to it, and enquires are made as to the ship, whence it has come, who is its owner and its rubban (that is, its captain), what is its cargo, and who has come on it of merchants and others. When all of this information has been collected, it is presented to the sultan, and if there are any person [of such quality] that the sultan should assign a lodging to him as his guest, he does so.

When I arrived with the qadi I have mentioned, who was called Ibn al-Burhan, an Egyptian by origin, at the sultan's residence, one of the serving-boys came out and saluted the qadi, who said to him "Take word to the intendant's office and inform the Shaykh that this man has come from the land of al-Hijaz." So he took the message, then returned bringing a plate on which were some leaves of betel and areca nuts. He gave me ten leaves along with a few of the nuts, the same to the qadi, and what was left on the plate to my companions ►



and the qadi's students. He brought also a jug of rose-water of Damascus, which he poured over me and over the qadi [i.e. over our hands], and said "Our master commands that he be lodged in the students' house," this being a building equipped for the entertainment of students of religion. The qadi took me by the hand and we went to this house, which is in the vicinity of the Shaykh's residence, and furnished with carpets and all necessary appointments.

Later on the serving boy brought food from the Shaykh's residence. With him came one of his viziers, who was responsible for the care of the guests, and who said "Our master greets you and says to you that you are heartily welcome." He then set down the food and we ate. Their food is rice cooked with ghee (clarified butter), which they put into a large wooden platter, and on top of this they set platters of kushan. This is the seasoning made of chickens, meat, fish and vegetables. They cook unripe bananas in fresh milk and put this in one dish, and in another dish they put curdled milk, on which they place pieces of pickled lemon, bunches of pickled pepper steeped in vinegar and slated, green ginger, and mangos. These resemble apples, but have a stone; when ripe they are exceedingly sweet and are eaten like other fruit, but before ripening they are acid like lemons, and they pickle them in vinegar. When they take a mouthful of rice, they eat some of these salted and vinegar conserves after it. A single person of the people of Maqdashaw eats as much as a whole company of us would eat, as a matter of habit, and they are corpulent and fat in the extreme.

On the fourth day, which was a Friday, the qadi and students and one of the Shaykh's viziers came to me, bringing a set of robes; these [official] robes of theirs consist of a silk wrapper which one ties round his waist in place of drawers (for they have no acquaintance with these), a tunic of Egyptian linen with an embroidered border, a furred mantle of Jerusalem

stuff, and an Egyptian turban with an embroidered edge. They also brought robes for my companions suitable to their position. We went to the congregational mosque and made our prayers behind the maqsura [area restricted for the ruler]. When the Shaykh came out of the door of the maqsura I saluted him along with the qadi; he said a word of greeting, spoke in their tongue with the qadi, and then said in Arabic "You are heartily welcome, and you have honored our land and given us pleasure."

*Source:*

*Cohen, Susan and Susan Douglass. "Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity 300-1500 CE. Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks 1000 – 1250 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*Excerpted from Beyond A Thousand and One Nights: A Sampler of Literature from Muslim Civilization (Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education), 154-155.*



## READING | Post Classical Era Travel Accounts | From Ibn Battuta, *The Rihlah* (Travels in West Africa, Fourteenth Century)

"The date of my arrival at Malli was 14th Jumada I seven hundred and fifty-three [after Hijra 28 June 1352]...I was accompanied by a merchant called Abu Bakr ibn Ya'qub. We took the Mima road. I had a camel which I was riding because horses are expensive, and cost a hundred mithqals each. We came to a wide channel which flows out of the Nile [meaning the Niger River] and can only be crossed by boats. The place is infested with mosquitoes, and no one can pass that way except by night. On reaching it I saw sixteen beasts with enormous bodies...so I said to Abu Bakr, "What kind of animals are these?" He replied, "They are hippopotami."

We halted near this channel at a large village, which had as a governor a negro, a pilgrim, and man of fine character, named Farba Magha. He was one of the negroes who made the pilgrimage in the company of Mansa Musa...We continued our journey from this village which is by the channel and came to the town of Quri Mansa. At this point the camel which I was riding died...I sent two lads whom I had hired for my service to buy me a camel at Zaghari, and waited at Quri Mansa for six days until they returned with it...Thence we went on to Tumbuktu, which stands four miles from the river. Most of its inhabitants are of the Massufa tribe, wearers of the face-veil...From Tumbuktu I sailed down the Nile [Niger] on a small boat, hollowed out of a single piece of wood. We used to go ashore every night at the villages and buy whatever we needed in the way of meat and butter in exchange for salt, spices and glass beads.

I went on from there to Gawgaw [Gogo], which is a large city on the Nile [Niger], and one of the finest towns in the Negrolands. It is also one of their biggest and best provisioned towns, with rice in plenty, milk and fish, and there is a species of cucumber there called inani which has no equal. The buying and selling of its inhabitants is done

with cowrie-shells, and the same is the case at Malli. I stayed there about a month, and then set out in the direction of Taghadda by land with a large caravan of merchants from Wuchin, which means "wolf"... I had a riding camel and a she-camel to carry my provisions.

We pushed on rapidly with our journey until we reached Taghadda. The houses at Taghadda are built of red stone, and its water runs by the copper mines, so that both its color and taste are affected. There are no grain crops there except a little wheat, which is consumed by merchants and strangers. The inhabitants of Taghadda have no occupation except trade. They travel to Egypt every year, and import quantities of all the fine fabrics to be had there and of other Egyptian wares...The copper mine is in the outskirts of Taghadda. They dig the ore out of the ground, bring it to the town and cast it in their houses. This work is done by their male and female slaves. When they obtain the red copper, they make it into bars a span and a half in length, some thin and others thick. The thick bars are sold at the rate of six or seven hundred to the mithqal. They serve also as their medium of exchange; with the thin bars they buy meat and firewood, and with the thick, slaves male and female, millet, butter, and wheat. The copper is exported from Taghadda to the town of Kubar, in the regions of the heathens, to Zaghay, and to the country of Barnu, which is forty days' journey from Taghadda. The people of Barnu are Muslims, and have a king called Idris."

*Excerpted from H. A. R. Gibb, translator, Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354 London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1929, 331-336*

*Source: Cohen, Susan and Susan Douglass. "Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity 300-1500 CE. Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks 1000 – 1250 CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*



## WORKSHEET | Trans-Hemispheric Networks – Compare/Contrast Chart

	IBN FADLAN	IBN JUBAYR	MARCO POLO	CHEN PU	IBN BATTUTA
TIME PERIOD OF THE TRAVELER					
EACH ITEM OF TRADE					
EACH MODE OF TRANSPORTATION					
ANY CUSTOMS RELATED TO TRADE					
ANY FACILITIES SPECIFICALLY USED FOR TRADE					
ANY OBSERVATIONS THAT THE TRAVELER MADE THAT INDICATE HOW TRADE AFFECTS THE PLACE IN GENERAL					



## LESSON 3.1.5 | ACTIVITY | Classroom Debate – Silk Road or Monsoon Marketplace

### PURPOSE

This activity asks you to consider all of the different aspects involved with the trade and exchange of goods, services, ideas, religion, innovation and wealth, and then determine a better trade route: the Silk Road or the Monsoon Marketplace. If you were a merchant during this era, which trade route would you select? This debate activity should help you really delve into the details of each trade route, considering the positive and negative aspects of each route, and how they still impact us today.

### ATTACHMENT

- The Debate Prep Worksheet
- The Debate Format Guide
- The Debate Rubric

### PREVIEW

Networks of exchange from the agrarian era, such as the Silk Road and the Monsoon Marketplace, ushered in a new era of interconnectedness around the world. The Silk Road made it possible for members of the Roman upper classes to purchase Chinese silk in Roman markets, and it facilitated the spread of Buddhism to China from India. The Monsoon Marketplace made it possible for the middle classes to purchase goods that were formerly only accessible by the elite, such as wood to build houses. It also facilitated the spread of Islam to Indonesia. While these trade routes facilitated the transfer of goods, technology and ideas that positively impacted people around the globe, these routes also had negative impacts. The spread of disease, in the form of the Black Death, is just one of many of the harmful outcomes that resulted from these trade routes.

Historians have traditionally focused on the Silk Road as being the most important and extensive trade route that came out of the agrarian era, while others have asserted that the Monsoon Marketplace was more impactful. Measuring impact is difficult, but in this debate you will argue that either the Silk Road or the Monsoon Marketplace had the most positive impacts in relation to the spread of goods, ideas, technologies, and disease. More specifically, you will answer this question: Which trade route had the most positive impacts around the world – the Silk Road or the Monsoon Marketplace?

### PROCESS

Your teacher will divide your class into two position groups: the Silk Road (Group 1) and the Monsoon Marketplace (Group 2). The Silk Road group will argue that their trade route was ultimately the most beneficial to society, while the Monsoon Marketplace will argue that their route was the most



## PROCESS CONT'D

beneficial to society. Each group is responsible for researching its position and preparing an argument to support its point of view. You may use any information provided in the course as well as research to make their points.

Questions you might consider in preparing their argument:

- Was the route safe to navigate or dangerous?
- What goods were sold and traded and who did this benefit?
- What ideas and innovations were spread, and how did this benefit people?
- What goods, ideas, or diseases spread that were detrimental?
- How do those trade routes impact us today in terms of positives and negatives?

Remember to use the Debate Prep Worksheet to help prepare for the debate. Don't forget to review the Debate Format Guide so you're aware of how much time you have for each section of the debate. It's also helpful to revisit the Debate Rubric as you prepare since this will help ensure you meet all debate criteria. Your teacher will likely use the Debate Rubric to decide which group argued their position more effectively.



## WORKSHEET | Debate Preparation

To prepare for the upcoming debate, fill in your statement (position), major points, and supporting examples. Also, try to figure out what the other team might say and be ready to make counterarguments in response to their points.

### Statement

State the answer to the debate question or the opinion that you'll be arguing.

### Major Points

Aim to have at least four major points as part of your opening argument. Each major point should clearly support your statement. Each major point should also have a piece of supporting evidence. Use your claim-testing skills to help ensure your supporting evidence is high quality.

*Major Point 1:*

*Examples and supporting evidence:*

*Major Point 2:*

*Examples and supporting evidence:*



## WORKSHEET | Debate Preparation (Cont'd)

*Major Point 3:*

*Examples and supporting evidence:*

*Major Point 4:*

*Examples and supporting evidence:*

### CHECKLIST

Before you begin your debate, be sure you've covered all of the points below. You should also look at the "Debate Rubric," which will help you understand the details of what you need to do to have a successful debate. Hold a practice round with your team as part of the preparation and use the Debate Rubric to "grade" your group members.

- ☐ Position statement is clear and concise.
- ☐ The overall argument is logical and easy to follow.
- ☐ Major points strongly support the position statement.
- ☐ The evidence provided supports the major points and is of high quality.
- ☐ Good eye contact and tone of voice. Kept audience's attention.



## HANDOUT | Debate Format Guide

Debates typically follow a very specific format and set of rules to make sure that everyone has equal opportunities to argue their positions. This is one possible format. Be sure to have a timer available so that groups stay within the given time limits.

### DEBATE

**INTRODUCTION** | Coin toss to determine which side goes first.  
Team A has 4-6 minutes to present their position.  
Team B has 4-6 minutes to present their position.

**BREAK** | Each team has 3-5 minutes to prepare  
a 2-minute rebuttal.

**REBUTTALS** | Team A has 2 minutes to present their rebuttal.  
Team B has 2 minutes to present their rebuttal.

**BREAK** | Each team has 3-5 minutes to prepare  
a 1-minute closing statement.

**REBUTTALS** | Team A has 1 minute to present their rebuttal.  
Team B has 1 minute to present their rebuttal.

**CONCLUSION** | Winner of the debate is determined by using  
the Debate Rubric.



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## HANDOUT | Debate Rubric | Results

Directions: Use this rubric to evaluate debates. Mark scores and related comments in the scoring sheet that follows.

	ABOVE STANDARD (4)	STANDARD (3)	APPROACHING STANDARD (2)	BELOW STANDARD (1)	SCORE
REBUTTAL AND CLOSING STATEMENT					
EXPLANATION OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION					
REBUTTAL AND CLOSING STATEMENT					
EYES, BODY AND VOICE					



## LESSON 3.1.6 | CLOSING | Obituary of Merchant

### PURPOSE

In this lesson, you have explored trade routes from a fairly zoomed out lens – you’ve examined the networks of trade, the goods that were exchanged, and how ideas and technologies spread. In this writing activity, you will zoom in and look at the life of a merchant that was part of the trade route. This will help you gain an understanding of how these

routes affected people personally, and you can draw parallels between experiences that occurred then that mimic experiences people have today.

### ATTACHMENT

- Writing Rubric

### PROCESS

In this activity they are going to write an obituary about a merchant that was either a part of the Silk Road or the Monsoon Marketplace. An obituary is essentially a death notice that typically includes a brief biography of a person. The obituary should be 1-2 pages long, and should include as much of the following information (See right) as possible:

Also, you can’t just make this all up, you will have to do some research to show that your obituary is a reasonable account of someone’s life at that time. You shouldn’t find a particular person, but rather evidence for how you know that the information you provided is plausible. Make sure to pay attention to the writing rubric requirements before submitting your obituary.

- Name
- Age
- Birth date and place
- Place of residence
- Names of family members including spouses, children, and grandchildren.
- Education or training
- Vocation
- Hobbies
- One anecdote about the person (this can just be fun)
- Cause of death
- Citations/references to support the plausibility of your obituary



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## HANDOUT | Writing Rubric | Results

Use this rubric to evaluate writing assignments. Mark scores and related comments in the scoring sheet that follows.

	ABOVE STANDARD (4)	AT STANDARD (3)	APPROACHING STANDARD (2)	BELOW STANDARD (1)	SCORE
<b>FOCUS</b> Identifies a specific topic to inform reader on concept, theory or event. Clearly states thesis with supportive topic sentences throughout document.					
<b>EVIDENCE</b> Writing demonstrates extensive research and details with a variety of sources and perspectives. Provides examples that enhance central theme and argument.					
<b>STRUCTURE</b> Cohesively links and analyzes primary sources related to the topic, and clarifies complex ideas for formal audience.					
<b>CRITICAL ANALYSIS</b> Evaluates historical claims and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.					



## LESSON 3.2.0 | OVERVIEW

Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, grew up on the east coast of the Mediterranean, but unlike Christianity and Judaism, it's not terribly well understood in the West. Muslim rule expanded throughout many parts of Afro-Eurasia due to military expansion and trade. In less than 200 years, Islam went from not existing to being the religious and political organizing principle of one of the largest empires in the world. In this lesson, you will examine the formation of the religion and analyze how merchants converted to the faith in order to economically benefit. You will also address Islam's influence on Afro-Eurasia as a whole.



## LESSON 3.2.1 | ACTIVITY | Elevator Pitch – Islam

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Elevator Pitch prompt is to allow you to formulate a position or theory toward an event in history by supporting your argument with speculation and prior knowledge of a subject, and thoughtfully reciting your pitch in a short, but

powerful manner. Extra points for salesmanship.

At this point, you won't have much background to bring to bear on the issue just yet. This early exercise helps to bring to the fore what you know coming into the unit.

### DIRECTIONS

Think about this question: What contributed to the spread of the Islamic faith? Formulate your response and list information to support your claim. Remember, this is an elevator pitch; you'll want to be persuasive and give us good reasons to believe you. After you're finished, we'll share pitches with small groups then discuss our favorites with the class.

### PREPARATION

Elevator Pitch: a short summary used to quickly and simply define a process, product, service, organization, or event.

Most Elevator Pitches are between thirty seconds to two minutes in length, roughly the amount of time one has with another person in an elevator to make a pitch. Formulate a quick, sixty second argument to the question posed by writing down key points to support your claim on a scrap piece of paper, notebook, sticky note or index card.

Use prior knowledge and a bit of showmanship when giving your pitch.



## LESSON 3.2.2 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #13 Islam, the Quran, and the Five Pillars

### PURPOSE

In this video, you'll learn all about the history of Islam, including the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad, the five pillars of Islam, how the Islamic empire got its start, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and more.

Learn about hadiths, Abu Bakr, and whether the Umma has anything to do with Uma Thurman (spoiler alert: it doesn't). Also, learn a little about the split between Sunni and Shia Muslims, and how to tell if this year's Ramadan is going to be difficult for your Muslim friends. Let's try to keep the flame wars out of this reasoned discussion.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #13 – Islam, the Quran, and the Five Pillars](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider the role religion plays on political and social institutions.



## LESSON 3.2.2 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Watch the video and answer the following questions. The captions are turned on to assist you in viewing the information. If you have questions or need clarification, just ask!

1. How and when did Islam originate?
2. In what ways does Islam relate to Judaism and Christianity?
3. How does the Quran differ from the Hebrew and Christian Bible?
4. What are some key themes of the Quran?
5. What are the Five Pillars of Islam?



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6. What is Sharia?

7. What important action occurred to Muhammad in 622 CE?

8. What is the (radically over-oversimplified) divide between the two major sects of Islam?

9. How were Muslims able to spread their influence throughout the world?

10. Why is it significant that Islamic followers spawned an explosion of trade and were keepers of classic texts?



## LESSON 3.2.2 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following question to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. If the tenets of Islam, worshipping a monotheistic god and taking care of those less fortunate than you, are so similar to other western religions, why is Islam so misunderstood in western culture?



## LESSON 3.2.3 | READ | Crash Course World History Overview – Islam — Bridgette Byrd O'Connor

### PURPOSE

In this article, Bridgette Byrd O'Connor provides a sense of how our own cultural and social background shapes our view of history. The study of religions in world history and geography courses is a basic requirement in every state's academic standards, just as it is a major feature of the National Standards for World History. The importance of studying the origins, beliefs, practices, and spread of religion is a matter of consensus because this subject has contemporary relevance. Also, religious movements have been enormously significant in human history. Religious beliefs and practices have brought forth traditions and institutions that have shaped

urban and rural life, built empires, and contributed to trade, literacy, and scientific development. Religious movements have influenced conflict and cooperation on many levels, and stimulated migration and travel.

In addition to viewing the Crash Course World History #13 video, this article provides an excellent overview of topics discussed throughout this unit.

### ATTACHMENT

- Crash Course World History Overview – Islam

### DIRECTIONS

Read the provided article and be ready to discuss major themes and topics following your completion of the reading.



## READING | Crash Course World History Overview – Islam — Bridgette Byrd O'Connor

As a student of history in the Western hemisphere, we often learn about historical events from the perspective of what is familiar to us. For example, the history of America focuses on not only American political culture but also on values and morals that were established during the colonial period and beyond, and those teachings come from a Christian background, for the most part. Therefore, we often view the history of other countries and cultures as being something that is “other”. Consequently, we know very little about the actual beliefs and practices of other faiths, which can be problematic, especially when what we do learn tends to be portrayed as something it is not. Since September 11, 2001, many Americans have been in both fear of Islam and ignorant of its actual practices since the beliefs of a small portion of Muslims labeled as radicals are the focus of media coverage, both mainstream and social media.

Islam did not exist prior to the 7th century CE. It was at the start of this century when Muhammad, a caravan operator from Mecca, was visited by the angel Gabriel. During these visits Gabriel revealed the final teachings of Allah (God) to him. Muhammad then began spreading Allah’s message to the people of Mecca and some of them accepted his teachings while others felt threatened by his message. Prior to the spread of Islam, the Arabian people were polytheistic and they were organized into a variety of different tribes. The Arabs also consisted of a combination of settled farmers and tradespeople as well as nomads. The tribes of the Arabian Peninsula helped protect each other and were based upon both family line and occupation. During this time many Arab tribes had become quite wealthy from carrying goods through the desert from Asia to Europe and vice versa. The Silk Road trade routes had been used for centuries to exchange goods and ideas from the East to the West and back again.

As the Arabs sat in the middle of this exchange, had local knowledge of the area, and domesticated camels to carry these goods then they became kind of like the ancient FedEx of the region. Muhammad was a part of this trade as he carried goods between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea and became well known for his reliability and honesty. These qualities attracted the attention of a wealthy merchant named Khadija, a widow who was also almost 20 years his senior, and she hired him to carry her merchandise. Muhammad and Khadija eventually married and had six children, four of whom lived to adulthood.

Islam literally means submission or surrender and is derived from the Arabic word for peace. In a religious context the term means that one should surrender him or herself peacefully to God, or Allah in Arabic. What confuses many is that Allah is no different from the Christian or Jewish God, in fact it is the exact same God and the teachings of the prophets of each of these faiths build upon each other.

For example, Muslims (the word used for the followers of Islam) believe in the Jewish prophets and that Jesus was also a prophet of God but not the Son of God, much like the followers of Judaism. However, Muslims also believe that Muhammad was the last prophet of God and the Quran, holy book of Islam, holds the final teachings of Allah. While the Quran is the main holy scripture of Islam, there are also other sacred writings including the Sunnah, or the teachings and practices of Muhammad. The Hadith make up the final sacred texts of Islam and these are quotes from the prophet that have been written and combined to form the basis of Islamic law (Shari’ah or Sharia). This may seem odd to those unfamiliar with Islam and familiar with American history and government, which views faith and government or laws as mutually exclusive (you know, that whole separation of church ►



and state that kind of exists and kind of doesn't). However, from its beginnings, Islam has been both a religion and a way of life in that the religious leaders of the faith were also the political leaders; therefore, the two are intertwined.

Islam is also welcoming of people from other religions who wish to convert, as it is a universal faith. The essential practices for any Muslim are the Five Pillars (kind of like the Ten Commandments but a little more about doing rather than what not to do). The first of these is the shahadah, which is the belief in one God and his prophet Muhammad, which means you must also renounce all other gods. The second is the salah, which are the five daily prayers one must perform. These prayers are done in the morning, around noon, in the afternoon, at sunset, and at night. Since the time is determined by the position of the Sun, prayer times change slightly depending on the season. These changes in the time of prayer along with the requirement that all followers must pray in the direction of Mecca would help foster innovations in science and technology, but more on that later. The third pillar is siyam or fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Fasting is a part of the three main monotheistic faiths with the goal being to deprive oneself of food and drink in order to realize how blessed you are in comparison with others who do not have as much and to rid yourself of temptation. By doing this you become closer to Allah and purify both the body and mind. Fasting is not just about giving up sustenance for your body but also about getting rid of things that might tempt the mind and soul. The month of Ramadan varies every year due to changes in the Islamic lunar calendar; therefore, fasting can be in the winter months when days are shorter and fasting is easier and in the summer when days are much longer with temperatures soaring into the triple digits. Ramadan is also about coming together as a community and sharing your experiences as a follower of Islam, with many Muslims gathering with their extended

family or at their mosque for the evening meal. The fourth pillar is zakah, which is giving a portion of your wealth back to the community. In general, Muslims are required to give 2.5% of their yearly savings to charity but there are exceptions to this if you are poor or cannot work and, of course, you can always give more than the required amount. The final pillar is the hajj, or the pilgrimage to Mecca, that all Muslims, if able, must make at least once in their lifetime. Muslims who complete the hajj are in essence walking in the shoes of Abraham, his wife Hajar, and son Isma'il in that the pilgrims should remember the sacrifices Abraham was willing to make to Allah to honor his command.

While practicing the Five Pillars is largely comprised of individual duties, the Islamic faith has had a much broader influence. Islam is not only about a person's commitment to Allah but also people's commitment to the larger Muslim community. While daily prayer may be done on one's own, most Muslims visit their local mosque (masjid) for worship. Mosques have more subdued decoration than a typical Christian church and have little to no furniture but rather an open space for rugs or mats where people stand shoulder to shoulder and pray. Men congregate in one area with women lining up in rows behind them so as not to accidentally touch during prayer. The pillar of charity also places the focus away from the individual to helping the entire community, especially those in greater need than oneself. The community also shares evening meals during the month of Ramadan, with Muslims often gathering at their local mosque to share in their experience with others. Finally, members of the Muslim community help those who are traveling to Mecca for the hajj by providing food and shelter to pilgrims. The growth and spread of Islam from its founding in the 7th century to the present has encouraged Muslims to identify with a worldwide community of followers and has also contributed to advances in the sciences and arts. ►



The building of mosques, much like the building of cathedrals during the Middle Ages in Europe, allowed Muslims to design mosques to suit local needs and to fit local architectural customs. The construction of mosques as well as the manufacture of prayer rugs supplied local carpenters, architects, and artisans with employment while also generating revenue for the town. The requirement of pilgrimage to Mecca encouraged Muslims to travel outside of their local area, which led to an increase in travel-related businesses such as inns and restaurants. While people of the Arab world had long been merchants and the carriers of goods through the desert, pilgrims added another dimension to these exchanges as goods, ideas, and the religion itself spread throughout the Middle East and beyond. While Islam eventually spread through the Middle East to North Africa and into Spain, it took a long time. Muslim rulers began conquering vast amounts of territory not long after the death of Muhammad but many leaders chose not to force conversion on the conquered people. This is spelled out in the Quran and many leaders followed the

example set by Muhammad, who allowed non-believers to convert to Islam when and if they chose to do so willingly. As the empire grew, however, Muslim rulers did encourage the spread of learning and trade. New inventions and technological innovations like the triangle-shaped sail, improved maps, and the domestication of the camel improved and extended trade. A common language and currency also facilitated trade and an increase in the exchange of goods and ideas. Muslim scholarship encouraged the preservation of ancient texts, which were then “rediscovered” by Europeans during the Crusades and therefore led to a rebirth of classical learning that was known as the Renaissance. While the Renaissance began in Italy, the rest of Europe would have to wait a couple hundred years before it emerged from the “Dark Ages”, but more on that in the next article.



## LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #16 Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa

### PURPOSE

In this video, you'll learn about Sub-Saharan Africa! So, what exactly was going on there? It turns out, it was a lot of trade, converting to Islam, visits from Ibn Battuta, trade, beautiful women, trade, some impressive architecture, and several empires. John not only cover the the West African Malian Empire, which is the one Mansa Musa ruled, but he discusses the Ghana Empire, and even gets over to East Africa as well to discuss the trade-based city-states of Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Zanzibar.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #16 – Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider how historical bias influences impressions on a region or culture. Why are some histories considered “uncultured” compared with others?



## LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Watch the video and answer the following questions. The captions are turned on to assist you in viewing the information. If you have questions or need clarification, just ask!

1. What prejudices have been applied to Africa with regard to its history?
2. What interesting event happened when Mansa Musa visited Alexandria?
3. What were European impressions of Mansa Musa and how did that impact Africa?
4. What assumptions should we make about Mansa Musa?
5. What types of trade occurred between North Africans (Berbers) and West Africans?



TIME \_\_\_\_\_

- 3



## LESSON 3.2.4 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Answer the following question to make connections across different concepts and think more critically about the information presented in the video.

1. Why are there distorted and perhaps unfair assumptions of African history?  
How might we better view the histories of the “uncivilized?”



## LESSON 3.2.5 | READ | Afro-Eurasia and the Rise of Islam – World History For Us All

Sharon Cohen & Susan Douglass

### PURPOSE

In these activities, you will examine the spread of Islam from its inception through the 7th and following centuries. The rise and spread of Islam profoundly affected large parts of Afro-Eurasia. This topic offers you an opportunity to study several interlinked historical processes. The spread of Islam is a distinct phenomenon that historians relate to rapid advances in urbanization, the growth of trade networks in Afro-Eurasia, and a series of migrations. Islam also gradually spread as a faith and way of life among the populations of a region extending from the Iberian Peninsula to the borders of China. Not until about four centuries after the conquests of Southwest Asia, North Africa, and parts of Inner Eurasia did Islam become the majority faith of the

population in those regions. These activities trace the rise of Islam, its spread, and the development of Muslim civilization. It also addresses its impact on Afro-Eurasia as a whole.

### SOURCE

- [Afro-Eurasia and the Rise of Islam](#)

### ATTACHMENTS

- Afro-Eurasia and the Rise of Islam Student Handout
- Chronology of the Spread of Islam Handout
- Islam's Impact in Afro-Eurasia (632 - 1000 CE) Graphic Organizer

### PROCESS

Since we have already studied the basic tenets of Islam, you will be tracing the spread of the faith and will distinguish the rapid expansion of territory of Muslim rule and the gradual spread of Islam among various societies. You will examine maps and chronology in order to assess cultural and political factors in the spread of Islam. Read the source material (provided or downloaded) and answer the corresponding questions with each activity. ►



## PROCESS CONT'D

1. Read "The Spread of Islam". Afterward we'll discuss previous ideas you may have about the spread of Islam "by the sword" or about "instant conversion" of regions to any world faith.

Here's something to consider: Why do people change from the religion they grew up with? List some thoughts here.

2. Read "Chronology of the Spread of Islam". What are some major events listed in all six historical segments into which the chronology is divided? What are examples of advances as well as setbacks for the spread of Islam? Let's discuss.

3. With that same partner, begin to examine "The Impact of Islam in Afro-Eurasia" by reading the excerpts and making notes by folding a sheet of notebook paper in quarters, drawing lines along the folds, and using both sides to complete the resulting eight boxes. Write a heading at the top of each box that reflects a realm of activity in which Islam had some impact, and quote segments from the two excerpts in support of that type of impact. After using this organizer to read the excerpts we'll discuss as a class how such influences were manifested during the period. Examples of such headings are: Urbanization, Migration, Growth of Trade, Spread of Knowledge, Language, Law, Technology, and Governance.



## HANDOUT | Afro-Eurasia and the Rise of Islam

### THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

In the century after Muhammad's death, Muslims conquered territory "from the Atlantic to the borders of China." Many students reading this often wrongly imagine that this huge region instantly became "Islamic," meaning that most of the people living in those lands quickly became Muslims. To the contrary, the spread of Islam in these vast territories took centuries, and Muslims made up a small minority of the population for a long time. In other words, the expansion of territory under Muslim rule happened very rapidly, but the spread of Islam in those lands was a much slower process. There are several kinds of historical evidence of this gradual conversion process that we will examine in this lesson.

***"Let there be no compulsion in religion."*** The Qur'an specifies, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2: 256). This verse states that no person can ever be forced to accept religion against his or her will. It tells Muslims that they cannot force people to convert to Islam. Muhammad set a precedent as the leader of Madinah. Under his leadership, the Muslims practiced tolerance towards those of other religions. They were signers of the Constitution of Madinah and of treaties with the non-Muslim groups. According to tradition, Muhammad often discussed religious ideas with the Jews, Christians, and polytheists (believers in many gods), and he heard their questions about his teachings. The Qur'an records some of the questions that people put to Muhammad, and his replies. Muslim leaders after Muhammad were required to be tolerant, based on the authority of both the Qur'an (in this and many other verses), and the Sunnah, that is, custom practiced by Muhammad or by early members of the Muslim community.

With some exceptions, Muslim leaders have adhered to this precedent over time. One major type of evidence for tolerance by Muslim political leadership is the persistence of many religious minorities in the lands Muslims have ruled. Spain is one example, where Christians and Jews lived and worshipped under Muslim rule and contributed to the society in many ways. The writings of well-known Jewish and Christian scholars, physicians, scientists, and artisans still exist. After the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain following the conquests of Ferdinand and Isabella, Jews settled in North Africa under Muslim rule. They were also invited by the sultan of the Ottoman empire to settle in Istanbul. Some of these communities still exist today. In Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey, for example, Christian and Jewish groups that pre-date the coming of Islam still exist, as do the Coptic Christians in Egypt, after 1400 years of Muslim rule there.

***Becoming Muslim.*** Muhammad preached Islam at Makkah and Madinah in Arabia for about twenty-three years, while he received revelation of the Qur'an, according to Islamic teachings. For the first ten years (612 to 622 CE), he preached publicly at Makkah. After the migration to Madinah he preached for ten years, until his death in 632, only in his own house — the first masjid (mosque) — to people who came to hear him. Preaching in houses or in the masjid became the pattern in Islam.

To accept Islam, a person only has to make the profession of faith (shahada) in front of two or more witnesses. Even



after a person has accepted Islam, he or she may take a long time to learn and apply its practices, going through many different stages or levels of understanding and practice over time. As Islam spread among large populations, this process was multiplied.

Different individuals and social classes may have had different understandings of Islam at the same time. Also, many local variations and pre-Islamic customs remained, even after societies had majority Muslim populations for a long time. These differences have been a source of diversity among Muslim societies and regions.

***Growth of Muslim population.*** It is quite easy to map the large territory ruled by different Muslim political groups, or to illustrate the expansion of an empire. We can shade in areas of a map, and we can track the dates of Muslim rulers and dynasties from the time of Muhammad to the present day. It is more difficult, however, to understand why historians speak of a geographic area as a “Muslim region,” “Muslim society,” “Muslim civilization,” or even “the Islamic world.” At a minimum, such terms must mean that most of the people who lived in those places considered themselves to be Muslims, that is, people who believed in the religion called Islam. By what point in time did the majority of people in those places accept Islam, and how rapid was its spread? What effect did the gradual or rapid spread of Islam have on language, customs, art, and politics? How did the fact that many people were converting to Islam relate to the development of Muslim culture and civilization? We know, of course, that substantial numbers of people in those regions continued to practice the faiths they had belonged to before Islam, including Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus and others. The social contributions of people of these religions continued under Muslim rule. As these former majorities became minorities, how were they affected?

How did the presence of a large region in which the majority of its inhabitants were Muslim affect adjoining regions where the majority accepted other faiths?

***The process of conversion.*** In the decades after Muhammad’s death, nearly all of the inhabitants of Arabia accepted Islam, except Christian and Jewish communities, which were allowed to continue practicing their faiths. As Muslim rule extended into regions beyond the Arabian tribal system, however, khalifas, that is, the successors of the Prophet as leaders of the Muslim community, did not encourage conversion to Islam among the populations of newly conquered areas.

Nevertheless, during the early caliphates (632–750) non-Arabs began to accept Islam. Conversion took place at first among the lowest classes of people. Men and women migrated to Muslim garrison cities to look for jobs and to offer their services to the ruling group. Learning about Islam in these centers, some converted and expanded the Muslim population. These migrants became associates, or *mawali*, of Arab tribes, a traditional method of integrating outsiders. Some migrant Arab and *mawali* converts founded families that later made important contributions in preserving and spreading Islamic knowledge. They became scholars of Islamic law, history, literature, and the sciences. In this way, Islam spread in spite of the policies of political rulers, not because of them.

During the years of the Umayyad Caliphate (Umayyad dynasty) from 661–750 CE, the overwhelming majority of non-Arab populations of the empire, which stretched from Morocco to Inner Eurasia, did not practice Islam. Toward the end of that time, the North African Berbers became the first major non-Arab group to accept the faith. Within a few centuries, Christianity disappeared almost completely in North Africa (today’s Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco), though Christian



groups persisted in many other Muslim regions. Jews remained as a small minority, with many living in Muslim Spain. The spread of Islam among Iranians and other peoples of Persia was the second major movement, beginning about 720 CE. Both of these early groups of converts caused problems for the central government. In North Africa, Berbers set up an independent caliphate, breaking up the political unity of Islam. In Persia, the revolution arose that replaced the Umayyad with the Abbasid dynasty in 750, though only a small proportion of the population of Iraq (ancient Mesopotamia, centered on the Tigris-Euphrates valley) had at that time accepted Islam. From then, however, Islam was no longer the religion of a single ethnic or ruling group, and the rates of conversion climbed more rapidly in lands under Muslim rule.

For example, Arab Muslim forces conquered Egypt in 642, but by 700 few Egyptians had become Muslims. By 900 CE, about fifty percent of the population was probably Muslim, and by 1200, more than 90 percent. In Syria, Islam spread even more slowly. There, the 50-percent mark was not reached until 1200, nearly six hundred years after the arrival of Islam. Iraq and Iran probably reached a Muslim majority by around 900 CE, like Egypt. In much of Spain and Portugal, Islam became established in the 500 years following the initial conquests of 711 CE, though it may never have become the majority faith. After Spanish Catholic armies completed the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, many Muslims and Jews were either expelled from Spain or converted to Christianity. Islam continued to exist, however, until after 1600. As in Spain and Portugal, Islam withered away in Sicily, the Mediterranean island that Muslims had conquered in the ninth century.

In Persia, Inner Eurasia, and India, Muslim law treated Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus just as it treated Jews

and Christians. Muslim rulers offered adherents of these religions protection of life, property, and freedom of religious practice in exchange for the payment of a tax, as an alternative to military service. In Sind (northwestern India), the Buddhist population seems to have embraced Islam in the eighth and ninth centuries. Buddhism disappeared entirely in that region. Hinduism, however, declined there more slowly than Buddhism did.

All of the lands described above had Muslim rulers. After the decline of the unified Muslim empire — from about 750 — Islam gradually spread to lands outside the boundaries of Muslim rule. After 1071, Anatolia (or Asia Minor), which makes up most of modern Turkey, came under the rule of Turkish animal-herding groups that had become Muslims. Islam spread gradually for centuries after that, and when the Ottoman Turkish empire enfolded much of southeastern Europe in the mid-fourteenth century, most Albanians and Bosnians, as well as some Bulgarians, became Muslims.

***Continuing Spread.*** Beginning in 1192, other Muslim Turkish military groups conquered parts of India, including most of the north all the way to present-day Bangladesh, which borders the Bay of Bengal. The number of Muslims in India gradually increased from that time. The people of Bangladesh had been Buddhists, but beginning about 1300, they rapidly embraced Islam. Elsewhere in India, except for Punjab and Kashmir in the far northwest, Hinduism remained the religion of the majority.

In South India and Sri Lanka, both merchants and Sufi preachers, that is, followers of mystical Islam, spread the faith. By 1300, traders and Sufis also introduced it to Southeast Asia. Over the next two centuries, Islam spread from Malaysia to the great archipelago that is today Indonesia.





Entering a region where Buddhism, Hinduism, and local polytheist religions existed, Islam required several centuries to become well established.

In Inner Eurasia beginning in the eighth century, Islam gradually spread to the original homelands of the Turkic-speaking peoples until it became the main religion of nearly all of them. Islam also spread into Xinjiang, the western part of China, where it was tolerated by the Chinese empire. Islam entered southern China through seaports, such as Guanzhou, the city where the earliest masjid exists.

**Africa.** Before 1500, Islam spread widely in sub-Saharan Africa. Before 1000 CE, the first major town south of the Sahara that became majority Muslim was Gao, a commercial center located on the Niger River in Mali. Over the centuries, many other rulers and parts of their populations followed this pattern. By 1040, groups in Senegal had become Muslims. From there, Islam spread to the region of today's Mali and Guinea. Muslims established the kingdom of Mali in the thirteenth century and the Songhai empire from 1465 to 1600. Farther east, Kanem-Bornu near Lake Chad became Muslim after 1100. In West Africa, like Turkestan, India, and Indonesia, traders and Sufis introduced Islam. When rulers accepted the faith, numerous Muslim scholars, lawyers, teachers, and artisans migrated into the region to help build Muslim administration and cultural life. African Muslim scholars became established in major towns like Timbuktu, where they taught and practiced Islamic law as judges. By 1500, Islam was established in West Africa in a wide east-west belt south of the Sahara. Local polytheistic religions remained strong, however, and Islam did not become the majority faith in this region until the nineteenth century.

In East Africa, traders spread Islam along the coast beginning at least by the tenth century. By the fourteenth century, the

numerous commercial city-states along the coast from today's Somalia to Tanzania were predominantly Muslim.

In the Sudan, south of Egypt, the population of Nubia gradually became Muslim during the fourteenth century, through immigration of Muslim Arab pastoral groups and because Christian rule became weak in that region.

### ***Strong Governments and the Spread of Islam.***

By understanding that the expansion of Muslim rule was different from the spread of Islam, we can see an interesting trend. Ironically, Islam has spread most widely and rapidly among populations at times when Muslim rule was weaker and less unified. When Muslim political regimes were decentralized, disunited, or completely absent, Islam as a religion flourished and often spread to non-Muslims. Influence by traders and Sufis and influence of Muslim scholars, lawyers, and artisans in the cities aided the spread of Islam to new areas. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire in southeastern Europe, or the Sultanate of Delhi, and the later Mogul empire of India had little success in spreading Islam, though they did gain territory. Non-Muslim populations seem to have viewed these powerful, tax-gathering Muslim rulers negatively, and so they resisted conversion to Islam. Whoever did embrace Islam in such circumstances, if not for material gain, usually did so because of the efforts of merchants, teachers, and traveling Sufi preachers, who were not part of the government.

*Source:*

*Cohen, Sharon and Susan Douglass. "Afroeurasia and the Rise of Islam 600 - 1000 CE." World History For Us All. PDF File.*



## HANDOUT | Chronology – The Spread of Islam

Beginning more than 1400 years ago, Islam has spread from the small trading town of Makkah on the Arabian Peninsula to become a world religion practiced on every continent. Like other world religions, Islam has been spreading ever since its origin, both through migration of Muslims to new places, and by individuals who have accepted Islam as their religion, having chosen to convert from other religions.

During the first century after Muhammad began preaching, rapid expansion of the territory under Muslim rule took place as a result of military campaigns. This territory did not instantly become “Islamic,” meaning that most people rapidly

became Muslims. Rather, the spread of Islam among the population took centuries, even in the regions conquered in the seventh century CE.

The following chronology marks dates when various regions were first introduced to Islam. It also gives the dates when Muslims probably became a majority of the population in those regions. The timeline also records trends in cultural and religious influence by both Muslims and non-Muslims which affected the spread of Islam.

CENTURY	YEAR(S)	EVENT
7th Century	622	Muhammad and the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah at the invitation of the Madinans. Muhammad became the city's leader, and the first Muslim community was established.
7th Century	630	Makkah surrendered to the Muslim force, placing the city under Muslim rule. Many members of Quraysh accepted Islam shortly after.
7th Century	632	Muhammad died, leaving much of the Arabian Peninsula under Muslim rule.
7th Century	634-650	Muslim armies defeated Byzantine and Persian imperial armies, bringing Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Iran under Muslim rule, including the cities of Jerusalem, Damascus, and Alexandria.
8th Century	711-715	Spain, Turkistan and Sind (northern India) were brought under Muslim rule.
8th Century	750s	Muslim soldiers settled in Chang'an (Xian), the largest city in China. Muslim merchants also visited and settled in southern Chinese ports.
9th Century	c. 800-850	Islam became the faith of the majority of people in Iran.
9th Century	819	The Samanids became the first independent Muslim state in northeastern Iran and Inner Eurasia. By the 900s CE, Islam became the majority religion in that region.



CENTURY	YEAR(S)	EVENT
9th Century	c. 850-900	Islam became the majority religion in Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia.
10th Century	c. 940-1000	Islam became the majority religion in Muslim-ruled parts of the Iberian Peninsula (today's Spain and Portugal).
11th Century	–	Muslim traders in West Africa began to spread Islam. Muslims settled in the Champa region of Vietnam and introduced Islam.
11th Century	1040s	The Almoravids, a Muslim Berber ruling group, spread Islam in Mauritania and other parts of West Africa. They campaigned against the Soninke kings of Ghana.
11th Century	1060s	The Almoravids ruled in North Africa and Muslim Spain (al- Andalus). The empire of Ghana weakened.
12th Century	1099-1187	Muslim soldiers settled in Chang'an (Xian), the largest city in China. Muslim merchants also visited and settled in southern Chinese ports.
13th Century	c. 1200	Islam became the majority religion in Syria.
13th Century	–	Ghana's empire collapsed and Mali rose. Rulers of Kanem, near Lake Chad, became Muslim.
End of the 13th Century	–	Muslims settled in northern ports of Sumatra (today's Indonesia). Muslim traders had close trade and cultural contacts in the trading cities on the east Indian coast, such as Gujarat.
End of the 13th Century	1295	1295 the Ilkhan ruler Ghazan "the Reformer" was the first Mongol leader to become Muslim, along with most of his Mongol generals.
14th Century	1300	Islam became the majority faith in Anatolia (part of today's Turkey).
14th Century	1324-1325	Mansa Musa, king of Mali, made the pilgrimage journey to Makkah, strengthening Mali's links with Islam.
14th Century	–	Mali, Gao, and Timbuktu, cities on the Niger River in west Africa became important centers of Muslim trade and scholarship
15th Century	–	A ruler of Malacca converted to Islam, while that port city was becoming an important stop on the China-Indian Ocean trade routes. From Malacca, Islamic influence spread in the Malay peninsula and nearby islands.
15th Century	1453	Ottoman forces conquered the city of Constantinople, ending the Byzantine Empire.



CENTURY	YEAR(S)	EVENT
11th Century to 15th Century	1085-1492	Spanish Christian forces carried out Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula.
15th Century	1495	Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain, while others were forced to convert to Christianity.

Sources:

Cohen, Sharon and Susan Douglass. "Afroeurasia and the Rise of Islam 600 - 1000 CE." *World History For Us All*. PDF File.

Sources for the Chronology: Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979); Khalid Y. Blankinship, "Politics, Law and the Military," in S. L. Douglass, ed., *World Eras: Rise and Spread of Islam, 622-1500* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2002), 230-232; Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vols. 1-2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Francis Robinson, ed. *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (New York: Facts on File, 1982).



## WORKSHEET | Islam's Impact in Afro-Eurasia (632-1000 CE) – Graphic Organizer

URBANIZATION	GROWTH OF TRADE
MIGRATION	SPREAD OF KNOWLEDGE
LANGUAGE	LAW
TECHNOLOGY	GOVERNANCE



### LESSON 3.3.0 | OVERVIEW

One of history's biggest empires. An empire with amazing speed and great success in conquests. They conquered more land in 25 years than the Romans did in 400; controlling more than 11 million contiguous square miles, an area roughly the size of Africa. According to one historian, they "smashed the feudal system" and created international law. Renowned for their religious tolerance, they created the first great free trade zone. Who is it? John Green's exception to every rule. Wait for it...The Mongols!



## LESSON 3.3.1 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #17 Wait for It...The Mongols!

### PURPOSE

In this video John Green examines, at long last, the most exceptional bunch of empire-building nomads in the history of the world, the Mongols! How did the Mongols go from being a relatively small band of herders who occasionally engaged in some light hunting-gathering to being one of the most formidable fighting forces in the world? It turns out Genghis Khan was a pretty big part of it, but you probably already knew that. The more interesting questions might be, what kind of rulers were they, and what effect did

their empire have on the world we know today? Find out, as John FINALLY makes an exception for the Mongols.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #17  
Wait for It...The Mongols!](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider what made the Mongols the exception to most of history's certainties. What kind of rulers were the Mongols and what effect did their empire have on the world?



## LESSON 3.3.1 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Watch the video and answer the following questions. The captions are turned on to assist you in viewing the information. If you have questions or need clarification, just ask!

1. What characteristics of key things do nomads, in this case the Mongols, have that differentiate them from settled peoples?
2. What was Genghis Khan's birth name and around when was he born?
3. What two innovations does John Green cite as the reasons Temujin won a Mongolian civil war and united Mongol confederations?
4. How did Mongols chose their leaders?



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_

5. What was one of Genghis Khan's failures as a leader?

6. What are some characteristics of Khan's army?

7. List John Green's five arguments for Mongol awesomeness.

8. List John Green's five reasons why the Mongols might not be so great.



## LESSON 3.3.2 | WRITE | An Open Letter – To Genghis Khan

### PURPOSE

In nearly every episode of Crash Course World History, John Green takes a moment to reflect on a major character or event discussed throughout the episode. In the previous activity, you were just introduced to Genghis Khan and the Mongols. With this activity, you will write a somewhat sarcastic open letter addressing a new idea or theme based on assumptions of the area of study. Capture your initial thoughts and impressions on the Mongols.

At the end of this lesson, you will once again write a reflection on the Mongols, but in a much deeper manner to see how your thoughts developed and changed over time.

### PREPARATION

- Writing journal, blog, Tumblr, Medium, etc.

### PREPARATION

Write about your initial impressions on the Mongol Empire. Toward the end of the video, John Green asks some significant questions on how we approach history. The Mongols and their empire are complex. “They promoted trade, diversity, and tolerance, while also promoting slaughter and senseless destruction. And what you think about the Mongols ends up saying a lot about you: Do you value artistic output over religious diversity? Is imperialism that doesn’t last better or worse than imperialism that does? And are certain kinds of warfare inherently wrong?”

Reflecting on the lists of Mongol awesomeness and non-awesomeness, write ‘An Open Letter’ to Genghis Khan. If you need assistance with kickstarting your reflection, consider one aspect of Mongol life you found interesting or significant. Highlight this characteristic or event in your letter, which should be no more than a page in length and take less than twenty minutes to write.



## LESSON 3.3.3 | READ | The Mongol Movement – World History for Us All — Dr. Anne Chapman

## PURPOSE

In these readings, you will learn more about the nomadic peoples known as the Mongols and the leader who unified them, Genghis Khan (or Chinggis Khan, as he is referred to in the handouts). This not only deepens their understanding of why the Mongols are an exception to pretty much everything in history, but also gives them an opportunity to use primary resources to try to construct a narrative about the past, much like historians do. In particular, these readings give students the opportunity to examine how leaders and groups of people were viewed by contemporaries, how harsh Mongol climate

and geography may have given them a physical advantage over others, and how the Mongols' religious beliefs influenced their conquests. Students will also examine the impact of the Mongol conquests on the conquered peoples.

## ATTACHMENTS

- World History for Us All: The Mongol Movement
- Mongol Student Handout Document
- Judging the Mongols Comparison Chart Worksheet

## PREPARATION

You will receive or download copies of Student Handouts 1 through Student Handout 5. Next you'll be divided into five groups, and assigned one or more of the five Student Handouts, which you should read, discuss, and summarize as a group. Then report your summaries to the class while others take notes on ideas and thoughts shared. Instead of one person from each group reporting to the class, form new groups, each of whose members have read a different Student Handout. You'll then teach the rest of the group the knowledge you gained in your first group (Jigsaw Method). You may be asked to read all the Student Handouts. This allows use of the detailed discussion questions based on the various individual sections.

Next, you'll be divided into two groups and provided with envelopes full of new information we'll examine as a Point/Counterpoint argument on the Mongols. In addition to information inside the envelope, you will be given the 'Judging the Mongols – Point/Counterpoint Comparison chart,' which should be completed as information is shared. You will examine the impact of the Mongol conquest on the conquered peoples in the following areas: **death, destruction, extortion, disease, and displacement**. Students will act as representatives to provide point/counterpoint arguments of the Mongols. Those students not directly involved in presenting the material will act as notetakers for the rest of their group.



## READING | The Mongol Movement: What Were the Mongol People Like In the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries? Depends on Whom You Ask!

According to Chinggis Khan's shaman, reported in a Mongol-written history in 1228:

Before you were born [1167]...everyone was feuding. Rather than sleep they robbed each other of their possessions...The whole nation was in rebellion. Rather than rest they fought each other. In such a world one did not live as one wished, but rather in constant conflict. There was no respite [letup], only battle. There was no affection, only mutual slaughter (Secret History of the Mongols, sec. 254, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 12).

According to the Italian friar John of Plano Carpini, who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the late 1240's:

In the whole world there are to be found no more obedient subjects than the Tatar...they pay their lords more respect than any other people, and would hardly dare to lie to them...Their women are chaste... Wars, quarrels, the infliction [causing] of bodily harm, and manslaughter do not occur among them, and there are no large-scale thieves or robbers among them...They treat one another with due respect; they regard each other almost as members of one family, and, although they do not have a lot of food, they like to share it with one another. Moreover, they are accustomed to deprivation [doing without]; if, therefore, they have fasted for a day or two, and have not eaten anything at all, they do not easily lose their tempers...While riding they can endure extreme cold and at times also fierce heat.

They are extremely arrogant toward other people, [and] tend to anger...easily...They are the greatest liars in the world in dealing with other people ...They are crafty and sly...[and] have an admirable ability to keep their intentions secret...They are messy in their eating and drinking and in their whole way of life, [and] cling fiercely to what they have. They have no conscience about killing other people...If anyone is found in the act of plundering or stealing in the territory under their power, he is put to death without any mercy.

The chiefs or princes of the army...take up their stand some distance away from the enemy, and they have beside them their children on horseback and their womenfolk and horses...to give the impression that a great crowd of fighting-men is assembled there. (Qtd. in Spuler 78-79.)

According to the French friar William of Rubruck who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the early 1250's:

It is the duty of the women to drive the carts, get the dwelling on and off them, milk the cows, make butter and to dress and sew skins...They also sew the boots, the socks, and the clothing, make the felt and cover the houses.





The men make the bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits, do the carpentering on their dwellings and carts; they take care of the horses, milk the mares, churn the mares' milk, make the skins in which it is put; they also look after the camels and load them. Both sexes look after the sheep and goats.

At the entrance [of the palace] Master William of Paris has made for him [the Great Khan] a large silver tree, at the foot of which are four silver lions each having a pipe and all belching forth white mare's milk...The whole dwelling was completely covered inside with cloth of gold, and in the middle in a little hearth was a fire of twigs and roots of wormwood...and also the dung of oxen (Qtd. in Spuler 96-97).

According to a letter by a Hungarian bishop who had custody of two Tartar captives taken in Russia, written to the bishop of Paris in 1257:

I asked them about their belief; and in few words, they believe nothing. They began to tell me, that they were come from their own country to conquer the world. They make use of the Jewish [actually, Uighur; the Uighurs were a semi-sedentary, literate steppe people, and early allies of the Mongols] letters, because formerly they had none of their own...They eat frogs, dogs, serpents and all things... Their horses are good but stupid (Qtd. in Paris 449).

According to a description by Matthew Paris, English chronicler, in the 1270's:

They are inhuman and beastly, rather monsters than men, thirsting for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men, dressed in ox-hides, armed with plates of iron...thickset, strong, invincible, indefatigable...They are without human laws, know no comforts, are more ferocious than lions or bears...They know no other language than their own, which no one else knows; for until now there has been no access to them....so that there could be no knowledge of their customs or persons...They wander about with their flocks and their wives, who are taught to fight like men (Qtd. in Rockhill).

*Source:*

*Chapman, Anne "Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4 Mongol Empire Builders: Fiends from Hell or Culture Brokers?"*

*1200-1400 CE" World History for Us All. PDF File.*



## READING | The Mongol Movement: What was the Mongol Leader, Chinggis Great Khan, Really Like? Depends on Whom You Ask!

According to a southern Chinese author who was an eyewitness of the bloody Mongol campaign in north China:

This man is brave and decisive, he is self-controlled, and lenient [merciful] towards the population; he reveres [respects] Heaven and Earth, prizes loyalty and justice (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 167).

The Indian historian Juzjani wrote in 1256 in the Sultanate of Delhi and had been an eyewitness of Chinggis Khan's raid on India in 1221. According to him:

A man of tall stature, of vigorous build, robust in body, the hair on his face scanty and turned white, with cat's eyes, possessed of great energy, discernment [judgment], genius and understanding, awe-inspiring, a butcher, just, resolute, an over thrower of enemies, intrepid [fearless], sanguinary [bloodthirsty] and cruel (Qtd. in Saunders 63).

Chinggis himself had a letter written to a Chinese Daoist sage whom he had invited to discuss religious topics.

The Daoist's companion included the letter in the account of the trip. He said:

I wear the same clothing and eat the same food as the cow-herds and horse-herders. We make the same sacrifices and we share our riches. I look upon the nation as my new-born child, and I care for my soldiers as if they were my brothers (Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 149).

The Muslim historian Rashid al-Din, the official court historian of the Mongol khan of Persia.

According to him, some of Chinggis's sayings included.

When the master is away hunting, or at war, the wife must keep the household in good order. Good husbands are known by their good wives. If a wife be stupid or dull, wanting in reason and orderliness, she makes obvious the badness of her husband.

Only a man who feels hunger and thirst and by this estimates the feelings of others is fit to be a commander of troops. The campaign and its hardships must be in proportion with the strength of the weakest of the warriors.

My bowmen and warriors loom like thick forests: their wives, sweethearts and maidens shine like red flames. My task and intention is to sweeten their mouths with gifts of sweet sugar, to decorate their breasts, backs and shoulders with garments [clothes] of brocade, to seat them on good geldings [horses], give them to drink from pure and sweet rivers, provide their beasts with good and abundant





[plentiful] pastures, and to order that the great roads and highways that serve as ways for the people be cleared of garbage, tree- stumps and all bad things; and not to allow dirt and thorns in the tents.

It is delightful and felicitous [good] for a man to subdue rebels and conquer and extirpate [destroy] his enemies, to take all they possess, to cause their servants to cry out, to make tears run down their faces and noses, to ride their pleasant-paced geldings [horses], to make the bellies and navels of their wives his bed and bedding, to admire their rosy cheeks, to kiss them and suck their red lips (Rashid al-Din, Collected Chronicles, qtd. in Riasanovsky 91).

According to inference from the laws that by tradition Chinggis set up:

If it is necessary to write to rebels or send messages to them they shall not be intimidated by an excessive display of confidence on our part or by the size of our army, but they shall merely be told: if you submit you will find peace and benevolence. But if you continue to resist—what then do we know [about your future]? Only God knows what then shall become of you (Bar Hebraeus, Chronicon Syriacum, qtd. in Spuler 40-41).

Whoever gives food or clothing to a captive without the permission of his captor is to be put to death.

[Leaders are to] personally examine the troops and their armament before going to battle, even to needle and thread; to supply the troops with everything they need; and to punish those lacking any necessary equipment.

Women accompanying the troops [are] to do the work and perform the duties of men, while the latter are absent fighting.

All religions [are] to be respected and...no preference [is] to be shown to any of them (Qtd. in Riasanovsky 83-85).

According to inference from the following decisions made by Chinggis Khan:

When fighting against hereditary enemies of his tribe, Chinggis's own son begged him to spare the life of the enemy leader's son. Chinggis replied: "How often have we fought them? They have caused us much vexation and sorrow. How can we spare his life? He will only instigate another rebellion. I have conquered these lands, armies, and tribes for you, my sons. Of what use is he? There is no better place for an enemy of our nation than the grave (Rashid al-Din, Collected Chronicles, qtd. in Riasanovsky 86)!"





At a Grand Council meeting headed by Chinggis in 1202, it was decided that “in days gone by the Tartars killed our ancestors and forefathers. [Therefore] we will sacrifice them in revenge and retribution...by massacring all except the youngest....down to the very last male and the remainder will be shared as slaves among us all (Secret History of the Mongols, secs. 148, 154, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 151).

*Source:*

*Chapman, Anne “Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4 Mongol Empire Builders: Fiends from Hell or Culture Brokers? 1200-1400 CE” World History for Us All. PDF File.*



## READING | The Mongol Movement: How Did Chinggis Turn a Pastoral Nomadic Society Into an Efficient War Machine?

Before Chinggis, the Mongols were organized into tribes that fought and raided each other for plunder, for women (no marriages were allowed between members of the same tribe), and to avenge insults. Largely self-sufficient, they often raided, traded with, and extracted tribute from neighboring settled agricultural communities.

In most tribes, there were no specialists other than shamans and blacksmiths. Women and men both contributed to the economy, and the division of labor by sex was not rigid. Those men who could afford it married more than one wife, each of whom had her separate household, owned property outright, and had considerable freedom of action. Women rode, shot with bow and arrow, and hunted. They gave political advice and could rise to the rank of chief, though rarely. The senior wife had special status and respect, and her children were often favored as heirs. On campaign, wives, children, and flocks often went with the army. Women and even children could be drafted to ride on the fringes of battle to simulate larger numbers. It is unclear whether they ever took an active part in combat. The tribes were divided into nobles and commoners, and only members of noble lineages could become chiefs, though class differences were not strongly marked.

All Mongols were fighters, but Chinggis made a reorganized army the core of the society and the carrier of many of his reforms. Under him and his successors, the Mongol army had the following characteristics, many designed by Chinggis himself:

- All males 15-70 served in the army, all as cavalry.
- The army's 95 units of 10,000 soldiers were subdivided into units of 1,000, 100, and 10. Members of different tribes were mixed together in units of every size to ensure loyalty to the army above loyalty to the tribe. Allies and levies from conquered territories were also integrated into the fighting force, the latter usually being placed in the front ranks.
- Absolute obedience to orders from superiors was enforced.
- Officers had tight control over their troops' actions (plunder only with permission, no one allowed to transfer out of their unit).
- Officers and men were bound to each other by mutual loyalty and two-way responsibilities.
- No one in the army was paid, though all shared to varying degrees in the booty. All contributed to a fund to take care of those too old, sick, or hurt to fight.
- During three months every year, large-scale hunting expeditions served as intensive military training simulations.
- Cavalry troops had to supply their own bows and other military equipment, which had to meet officers' standards.
- Gathering intelligence had high priority. Scouts were sent out, local knowledge sought, and traveling merchants rewarded for information.
- Foreign experts and advisors were extensively used, notably Chinese and Persian engineers skilled at making and using siege weapons such as catapults and battering rams.



The highest level of government was Chinggis and his family, especially his sons by his senior wife and their descendants, known as the “Golden Family.” From among their members the Great Khans and after Chinggis Khan’s death the khans ruling the four successor empires were selected by agreement of the Kuriltai, the council made up of Chinggis’s family members and those others they invited.

Lack of clear-cut rules of succession opened the way for power struggles after the death of each ruler. Some earlier pastoral nomadic empires did not long survive the death of the leader who founded them. The Mongol state was unusual in surviving for as long as it did, even though it divided into four separate kingdoms, or khanates after about 1260.

Chinggis Khan’s administrators were picked for demonstrated high performance regardless of their wealth or social class. Among Chinggis’s closest advisors were people from both allied and conquered non-Mongol backgrounds, notably literate scholars and scribes from China, Persia, and the Inner Eurasian oasis towns.



## READING | The Mongol Movement: What Was it Like to Live in the Mongol Homeland?

John of Plano Carpini, an Italian friar who traveled to Mongolia in the 1240's described the Mongol homeland as follows:

In some parts the country is extremely mountainous, in others it is flat...in some districts there are small woods, but otherwise it is completely bare of trees...Not one hundredth part of the land is fertile, nor can it bear...unless it be irrigated by running water, and brooks and streams are few there and rivers very rare...Although the land is otherwise barren, it is fit for grazing cattle; even if not very good, at least sufficiently so.

The weather there is astonishingly irregular, for in the middle of the summer...there is fierce thunder and lightning which cause the death of many men, and at the same time there are very heavy falls of snow. There are also hurricanes of bitterly cold winds, so violent that at times men can ride on horseback only with great effort. [Sometimes one can] scarcely see owing to the great clouds of dust. Very heavy hail also often falls there. Then also in summer there is suddenly great heat, and suddenly extreme cold (Qtd. in Dawson 5-6).

Carpini was right. Winters in the Mongol homeland were long and cold and still are today. The average mean temperature in January is minus 34 degrees centigrade, but extremes have been recorded of minus 55 degrees. The air temperature fluctuates heavily from day to day. Even in the mountainous region of the northwest, the heat can hit 40 degrees centigrade. There is little rainfall, and 85 percent of it falls during the three summer months. There is evidence that the climate of the steppes had turned cooler and drier for a while before and during the time of the Mongol conquests. Climatological data shows that the climate of the steppes was turning cooler and drier about the time of the Mongol

conquests, reducing the season when ample grazing land was available for horses, sheep, and other stock. We can only speculate, however, about a possible connection between the Mongol conquests and an ecological crisis (Christian 387).

Horses were essential to the Mongol way of life. They were pastured entirely on the open steppe, with no supplementary grain or hay even in winter. Although extremely hardy, Mongol horses could not be ridden day after day or carry heavy loads. Therefore, every mounted soldier ideally possessed not one horse but a string of remounts as well (Lattimore 2).

Long-distance travel was tough. William of Rubruck, a Flemish monk who visited Karakorum, the Mongol capital, in the 1250s, took eleven months to return from there to the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. The Merchant's Handbook, a book based mostly on information from Genoese traders of the early 1300's, suggests a nine-month journey from the Black Sea to Beijing, the capital of the Chinese Mongol state. People traveled across the steppe by ox-drawn wagon, river boat, camel caravan, donkey, and horse. The Daoist sage Ch'ang Chun took fourteen months to get from the Chinese border to Samarkand in what is today Uzbekistan, a country north of Afghanistan (Larner Appendix II).

His companion Li Chih-Ch'ang's account of the journey suggests some reasons for the length of time taken. He reported that:

The country was now so mountainous, the ascents so formidable and the valley-gorges so deep that the use of wagons became very difficult. The road here was first made for military purposes by the great Khan's third son. Our cavalry escort helped us to deal with the wagons, ►



dragging them up hill by attaching ropes to the shafts and getting them down by tying ropes to the wheels and locking them fast...Our oxen were incapable of further effort and abandoning them by the roadside we harnessed six horses to our wagons. Henceforward we did not again use oxen.

We descended a deep ravine...Stream after stream rushes into this defile, forming a torrent that bends and twists down the pass...It was the Great Khan's second son who when accompanying his father on the western campaign first constructed a road through the defile, piercing the rocks and building no less than forty-eight timber bridges of such width that two carts can drive over them side by side (Li Chih-Ch'ang 76-77, 84-85).



## READING | The Mongol Movement: Shamans, Heaven, and the Ideology of Conquest

The Mongols' religion was shamanism. They combined this with belief in Tengri, the Eternal Sky, as the supreme supernatural power. They also believed in an earth and fertility goddess and in nature spirits. The major religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam, were seen as having access to other spiritual beings who might, if properly approached, also be helpful.

Shamans were considered go-betweens or bridges, joining the human and the spirit world. They could be women or men, and they were always people of prestige and importance. They communicated with the spirits in trances, exorcised evil, blessed flocks and herds, and made prophecies by examining cracks in the burnt shoulder-blades of sheep. Mongols had no temples, no hierarchy of religious specialists, no regular public worship, no sacred scriptures, and no required beliefs. Their religious concerns were practical aimed toward ensuring fertility, prosperity, health, and military success. As chiefs usually did, Chinggis Khan and his descendants climbed to high places to pray to Heaven before a decisive battle. The Mongols also regarded vengeance for insult or injury as a moral duty, approved by Heaven. And the duty to avenge was handed down from generation to generation.

It was only gradually that Chinggis and his Mongols arrived at an ideology of conquest. Eventually, he, or at least the sons and grandsons who followed him, came to believe that the Mongols had a mission from Heaven to conquer the world and establish a universal empire. In this, Mongol leaders were almost certainly influenced by contact with the Chinese ideology of the Mandate of Heaven, the belief that the emperor ruled because the Supreme Being wanted him to. Some Mongol tribes professed the form of Christianity known

as Nestorian. So Christian monotheism and rituals may have influence them, too.

The Mongol view of Heaven's attitude towards their conquests developed slowly but surely. Chinggis Khan's early campaigns were clearly not part of a larger plan for universal conquest. In 1206, he was named Great Khan primarily because of his military and political successes. However, it helped that one of his followers saw a vision: "A white ox harnessing itself to a wagon and pulling it behind Chinggis, bellowing: 'Heaven and Earth agree, let [Chinggis] be the nation's master! Bearing the nation, I am bringing it to him'" (Onon, 45)!

His first invasion of northern China in 1211 followed the usual pattern of nomad raids. Chinggis made no attempt to occupy or to keep Chinese territory, which was then under the Jin dynasty, a ruling family that had come originally from Manchuria far north of the Yellow River valley. The Mongols returned, however, and in 1215 took the Jin capital of Beijing. Chinese officers deserted to Chinggis in large numbers, some bringing with them tens of thousands of troops.

Determined to crush all resistance, Chinggis discussed with his generals what to do with the land once it was conquered. According to some accounts, they considered exterminating the north Chinese farming population in occupied territories and turning the country into pasture for the Mongols' horses. They were dissuaded when one of Chinggis's valued Chinese advisors pointed out that taxes from a live population were worth more to the conquerors than a depopulated land occupied by horses.

Evidence suggests that Chinggis originally had no intention of invading the Qara-Khitai and Khwarizm empires, which lay



to the west of Mongolia. The populations of these empires varied from highly sophisticated urban Persians to illiterate nomads. Most were unhappy with their own rulers. Chinggis conquered the huge Inner Eurasian territory of the Qara-Khitai without much trouble. He then attacked Khwarizm, which included northern Persia, in revenge for its ruler unwisely killing some Mongol envoys. Chinggis announced that "Heaven has granted me all the Earth, from sunrise to sunset" (Juvaini, Qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159). This was a claim to universal empire. He would stick by it for the rest of his life, and his descendants would echo the claim.

From this time on, he consistently considered those opposing him not as enemies but as rebels. That made resistance to Mongol takeover treasonous, meriting wholesale executions as punishment. By the 1240s, it was reported that "The Mongols do not make peace with anyone who has not submitted to them, because of the instruction of Chinggis Khan that they should seek to bring all peoples under their yoke" (John of Plano Carpini, qtd. in Ratchnevsky 159). There were other reasons for conquest besides religious ideology:

- Enemies and continual conquests were needed to keep the Mongol forces united and not slipping into the old ways of tribal squabbling and feuding.
- The army was financed with booty.
- Followers needed rewards in plunder, lands, and slave captives to keep them loyal.
- The Mongol elite's newly-honed taste for luxuries could not be satisfied from the old nomad economy.
- Each conquest put the Mongols in touch with new enemies and new threats.

Chinggis's ideology of ruling those he conquered was simple.

His rule was intended solely to benefit the Mongols.

Subject peoples were seen only as sources of plunder, cannon-fodder, forced labor, taxes, and experts in areas where Mongols were ignorant.



## ACTIVITY | The Mongol Movement: Judging The Mongols and Their Influence on Religion

The impact of the Mongol conquest on the conquered peoples included:

- Death
- Destruction
- Extortion of wealth
- Disease
- Displacement

It also included:

- The intensification of activity on the trade routes connecting East Asia with the Mediterranean lands and Europe.
- The further spread of Islam in Asia
- The advancement of Tibetan Buddhism in China.

**Death** The Mongols inflicted it on a large scale. In battle, their powerful bows caused heavy enemy casualties. Moreover, mass slaughter of defeated enemy soldiers and civilians was used as a deliberate policy of terror in order to:

- Decrease the enemy's will to fight.
- Induce cities to surrender without fighting, thus avoiding long sieges, which the Mongol army could not afford because it needed to keep moving to find grazing land for its horses.
- Avoid the risk of leaving enemies behind that might be capable of renewing resistance.
- Reduce the size of the occupying detachments needing to be left behind.

The total death toll directly inflicted by the Mongols during the period of their conquests, spanning nearly two centuries, may have been several millions. This includes the deaths by hunger and disease that were by-products of Mongol military operations and rule.

**Death Counterpoint** More urban populations were spared than were massacred. Often spared were artisans, clerics of all religions, scribes, scholars, merchants, young women, and often officers, nobles, and administrators.

Mass slaughter was not a Mongol monopoly either in their own time or later. In taking a little Song Chinese town in 1218, the Jin general had 15,000 of the inhabitants put to the sword. In 1291, King Edward of England slew nearly 10,000 people of Berwick. In 1303, 30,000 Hindus died in a battle at Chitor.

By the time of Mongke's rule, the Great Khan insisted that destruction be limited to a minimum and civilians be left alone. To show he was serious, he had a senior Mongol commander of 10,000 publicly executed for killing a Persian civilian. Khubilai's revision of the Chinese law code reduced the number of offenses that carried the death penalty to half what it had been under the previous dynasties.

**Destruction** The Mongols often destroyed the towns they attacked, usually as a by-product of the battle, sometimes deliberately after their conquest. Mongols traditionally had no use for towns. Destroying them was a practical measure to prevent their use for resistance.

Irrigation channels, without which agriculture in regions with fragile ecosystems was impossible, were in many areas seriously damaged or neglected. Gradually they silted up and became unusable, with serious long-term ecological consequences that resulted in a set-back for agriculture over wide areas for centuries. This problem was especially acute in Persia and Iraq.



Destruction was a by-product of the Mongols' conquests, rather than policy. They were unaware of or uninterested in the damage; while the local population, reduced by flight, massacre, famine, disease, could not spare the labor to restore and maintain the irrigation channels.

**Destruction Counterpoint** There was a great deal of construction initiated and supported by the Mongols. Many of the towns the Mongols destroyed rose again a few years later with Mongol help.

Courier services were expanded and many additional way stations were built along trade routes, where both troops and civilian travelers could get food, drink, lodging, and a change of horses. In China under Khubilai Khan, the postal relay system came to include 1400 way stations 14-40 miles apart. Roads and bridges built originally to service the Mongol military became trade and travel routes. The extension of the Grand Canal to Beijing by the Mongols allowed cheap transport of rice from southern to northern China.

**Extortion of Wealth** After first plundering the conquered, the conquerors were for a while satisfied with tribute in the form of demand of silk, grain, precious metals, and sophisticated war machinery. Unpredictable and capricious demands were gradually replaced with regular though intermittently extortionate taxes, sometimes made worse by demands that greedy Mongol princes and officials made for extra payments.

**Extortion of Wealth Counterpoint** Some of the wealth that flowed to the Mongols was redistributed. Only part made its way to Mongolia. Much went back to those conquered areas where Mongols settled as occupying troops, administrators, and governors.

From about 1250, the Mongols undertook reforms.

The Great Khan Mongke commanded: "Make the agricultural population safe from unjustified harassment, and bring despoiled provinces back to a habitable condition."

He introduced the very modern graduated income tax; repaid debts of previous rulers said to be owing to merchants; and made it more difficult for princes and high officials to practice extortion.

The lot of some segments of the conquered population actually improved, owing to profits from the trade promoted and supported by the Mongols, to their enforcement of law and order within their territories, and to their opening of careers to merit, not only birth or wealth. The poorest classes received something like government welfare assistance: food, clothes, and money.

**Disease** The association of disease and warfare is commonplace. Troops live under more unsanitary conditions than is normal. Unburied corpses often contaminated water supplies. Among the overcrowded and underfed in besieged cities and in close quartered armies, an infectious illness could spread quickly. The existing food supply must be stretched to feed the invading army, leaving little for the local population and thereby reducing its immune system.

The frequent long-distance travel of military personnel, merchants, and others promoted the wider spread of diseases. Of these the Black Death (bubonic plague) was the best known and most severe. This disease may have been carried by soldiers from Inner Eurasia to the Black Sea, and from there to West Asia, North Africa, and Europe. This infection killed about one third of the total population of Europe.

**Disease Counterpoint** There is no disease counterpoint.

Disease is awful. And while the Black Death traveled along trade routes regulated by the Mongols, it is unlikely that they understood exactly what was occurring.

**Displacement** During the Mongol campaigns of conquest and later, there was large-scale enslavement and forced movement of populations.

- Many fled in terror when news reached them of an approaching Mongol army.
- Within the army, peoples of different backgrounds were deliberately mixed in all groupings from 10 men to 10,000. They and their families, who often accompanied Mongol armies, moved long distances on campaigns and spent long periods in far-away places as occupying armies.
- In conquered territories, the Mongols usually rounded up the craftspeople, and assigned them to Mongol princes and commanders. These captives, who could number tens of thousands in a single city, were carried off to Mongolia or other parts of the growing empire. This gave rise to considerable population exchanges between Russia, Central Asia, Persia/Afghanistan, Mongolia, and China.

**Displacement Counterpoint** Although captive artisans and young women (destined to be slaves, concubines, prostitutes, and entertainers) often remained in their masters' hands for the rest of their lives, some gained their freedom and married locally, some eventually returned to their homelands. Moreover, artisans often gained privileges. The movement of peoples resulted in exchanges of goods, ideas and styles and in frequent and widespread contact between peoples of widely different cultural, ethnic, religious, and language backgrounds.

- Thousands of people traveled from western and central parts of Eurasia to serve the Mongol regime in China. Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant who traveled to China with his father and uncle in 1271 and remained there for seventeen years, was just one of these foreigners seeking opportunity in Mongol administration.
- Genoese merchants, who traded extensively in the Muslim lands and Inner Eurasia in the Mongol era sold Chinese silk and "Tatar cloth" at the fairs of Northern France.
- Chinese artisans designed ceramics especially to appeal to Muslim tastes.
- The Chinese exported copper and iron goods, porcelain, silks, linens, books, sugar, and rice to Japan and Southeast Asia in return for spices and exotic items like rhino horns.
- At the time of his death in Italy, Marco Polo had among his possessions a Mongol slave, Tartar bedding, brocades from China, and a Buddhist rosary.
- Khubilai Khan had Persian copies of the works of Euclid and Ptolemy translated into Chinese.
- Egyptian experts were called in to improve Chinese sugar-refining techniques.
- Muslim medical and astronomical sciences became known in China. Chinese medical works were translated into Persian.
- Buddhist monks built Chinese style pagodas in Persia.
- Persian miniatures show Chinese-style mountains and dragons.
- A Mongol version of the traditional stories about Alexander the Great was produced.
- Diplomatic contact with Western Europe intensified.
- Columbus owned a copy of Marco Polo's book, and on his first voyage he took with him a letter from the Spanish king to the Great Khan.



## MONGOL INFLUENCE ON RELIGION:

Islam's spread among the peoples of the Mongol empire was also helped by the movement of peoples.

- Many of the Turkic groups that allied with the Mongols had earlier converted to Islam. A significant number of them were literate, and employed by the Mongols as clerks, administrators, and translators as well as soldiers. They carried the Qur'an and their beliefs to new potential converts.
- Persia and Iraq were overwhelmingly Muslim when the Mongols swept in. Persian became one of the official languages of the Mongol empire, used even in China. And Persian culture, along with Islam, spread into Central and Eastern Asia.
- The Mongol Great Khans' preferred Muslims for senior positions in China. They thought that foreign Muslims could be more impartial than local Chinese. The foreign recruits could be blamed in case of Chinese dissatisfaction. Scholars from Persia were especially admired for their scientific and cultural achievements.
- Starting in the thirteenth century, the Mongol khans of the Golden Horde and of Persia converted to Islam and threw their governments' power behind the Muslim faith.

Buddhism advanced in China owing partly to direct support from the Great Khans, starting with Khubilai. Tibetan lamas (monks), who had frequently held secular as well as religious power at home, began to move to China. Khubilai, whose wife Chabi was an ardent Buddhist, found the political experience of the lamas useful to him. He put a number of them in positions of power and influence. He also made large donations to Buddhist temples, gave tax-exemption to Buddhist monks, and supported them in their arguments with Chinese Daoists.

Christianity lost out in the long run in Asia, though not through any action of the Mongols. Some members of the Mongol princely houses and senior advisors were Nestorian Christians. Christians also served in the army. Some of the steppe tribes within the Mongol empire were Nestorian Christians. Several Popes, that is, the head of the Latin, or Roman Catholic Christian church, sent several envoys and missionaries from western Europe to Mongolia and China. European leaders had hopes of allying with Mongol leaders against the Muslim powers that challenged European political and commercial interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Neither the political overtures nor missionary labors resulted in much success for the Latin Church in Asia.

Christianity suffered partly because it did not speak with a single voice: believers in Latin Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Nestorian, and other Christian doctrines engaged in heated disputes with one another and competed for converts. Latin Christianity never caught on in any of the Mongol lands, and, with the advance of Islam, Nestorian communities in China and Inner Eurasia gradually shrank.

*Source:*

*Chapman, Anne "Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4 Mongol Empire Builders: Fiends from Hell or Culture Brokers? 1200-1400 CE" World History for Us All. PDF File.*



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## WORKSHEET | Judging The Mongols – Point/Counterpoint Comparison Chart

	POINT	COUNTERPOINT
DEATH		
DESTRUCTION		
EXTORTION OF WEALTH		
DISEASE		
DISPLACEMENT		



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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EXTENSION ACTIVITY | Mongols Influence On Religion

	MONGOL INFLUENCE
ISLAM	
BUDDHISM	
CHRISTIANITY	



## LESSON 3.3.4 | VIDEO | History vs. Genghis Khan – Alex Gendler

### PURPOSE

As you continue to formulate opinions on the Mongols, this video will reinforce what's been examined in previous lessons: that while some historians portray Genghis Khan as a fearsome warlord waging an unstoppable conquest across Eurasia, others view him as a unifier who paved the way for the modern world.

### LINK

- [History vs. Genghis Khan – Alex Gendler](#)

### PROCESS

Just watch the video and write down discussion points or items of interest. We'll have a brief review of the video and address questions you might have.



## LESSON 3.3.5 | WRITE | 'Dear Me From the Past'

### PURPOSE

In this lesson, you have examined the complex, often divisive topic of the Mongols and their legacy in history. You have analyzed how independent nomadic groups of the Asian plains were unified by Genghis Khan, who forged one of the largest empires the world has ever seen. While the Mongols were brilliant at conquest, they lacked administrative control which aided in their empire quickly disappearing. At the beginning of this

less, you wrote 'An Open Letter' to Genghis Khan that asked for them to form an opinion of the leader and his empire. Now you are to consider that original opinion and to reevaluate it given the new information acquired throughout the lesson. How has your opinion changed over time? How and why?

### ATTACHMENT

- Writing Rubric

### PROCESS

Write a new letter, this time to your former self expressing these changes in perspectives. 'Dear Me From the Past' should be 1-2 pages long and address each of the following topics:

- What was their original impression on Genghis Khan?
- What specific new information and evidence changed or reinforced their opinion on Genghis Khan and the Mongols?
- How did this potential change or reinforcement occur?
- How does the new information change the way they feel?
- How is an in-depth analysis of an empire and its legacy essential to studying history?
- What is your final conclusion on the Mongols? What's your verdict on their legacy?



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## HANDOUT | Writing Rubric | Results

Use this rubric to evaluate writing assignments. Mark scores and related comments in the scoring sheet that follows.

	ABOVE STANDARD (4)	AT STANDARD (3)	APPROACHING STANDARD (2)	BELOW STANDARD (1)	SCORE
<b>FOCUS</b> Identifies a specific topic to inform reader on concept, theory or event. Clearly states thesis with supportive topic sentences throughout document.					
<b>EVIDENCE</b> Writing demonstrates extensive research and details with a variety of sources and perspectives. Provides examples that enhance central theme and argument.					
<b>STRUCTURE</b> Cohesively links and analyzes primary sources related to the topic, and clarifies complex ideas for formal audience.					
<b>CRITICAL ANALYSIS</b> Evaluates historical claims and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.					



## LESSON 3.4.0 | OVERVIEW

The Middle Ages; The Dark Ages; The Medieval Period - lots of names for the time following the fall of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance. Regardless of the name, this period of study is vibrant and complex with power struggles, jousting knights, construction of grand cathedrals, and The Black Death. Fearing hostility from an expanding Muslim Empire, Pope Urban II sent support to the Byzantine Empire which kicked off the Crusades. Meanwhile in China and Japan, the “Dark Ages” didn’t really exist at all.



## LESSON 3.4.2 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #14 The Dark Ages

### PURPOSE

John Green teaches you about the so-called Dark Ages, which it turns out weren't as uniformly dark as you may have been led to believe. While Europe was indeed having some issues, many other parts of the world were thriving and relatively enlightened. John covers European Feudalism, the cultural blossoming of the Islamic world, and the scientific and artistic advances in China, all during these "Dark Ages." Along the way, John will raise questions about the validity of Europe's status as a continent, reveal the best and worst years

of his life, and frankly state that science and religion were once able to coexist.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #14 – The Dark Ages](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider how the modern corporate world might reflect feudalism.



## LESSON 3.4.2 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. What traits did Medieval Europe as compared with the Roman Empire during this era?

2. How were European countries governed?

3. What changes to the Muslim Empire occurred during the Umayyad Dynasty?

4. How did the Abbasids improve the Muslim Empire after taking control in 750 CE?



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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5. To what important cultural and scientific advancements do we owe the Arabian Empire?

6. What is significant about Islamic Cordoba?

7. To what can we attribute to the Tang Dynasty in China?

8. What is notable about the Chinese 11th Century?



## LESSON 3.4.3 | READ | The Not So “Dark Ages” — Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

### PURPOSE

How we learn and view history depends upon the perspective of the people telling the story. For those of us who grew up learning history as western civilization, we often learned about the stories of great men, great deeds, and great (or not so great) wars. However, it’s important to examine history from multiple perspectives and through different filters. In order to get a more balanced view of not only European history, but also the history of other cultures and geographical regions during this era, it is necessary to look beyond European sources and Europe in general. This article (and subsequent activities) examines major themes

and occurrences throughout the world. It addresses life in Europe following the fall of the Roman Empire; from the feudal system and the dominance of the Catholic Church in everyday lives. We also read about how the “Dark Ages” in China weren’t dark at all. Finally, we learn more about our old friends the Muslims and the Mongols.

### ATTACHMENT

- The Not So “Dark Ages”  
edited by Bridgette Byrd O’Connor.

### PREPARATION

Read the provided article (The Not So “Dark Ages”) and be ready to discuss major themes and topics following your completion of the reading.



## READING | The Not So “Dark Ages” — Bridgette Byrd O’Connor

How we learn and view history really depends upon the perspective of the people telling the story. For those of us who grew up learning history as Western Civilization, we often learned about the stories of great men, great deeds, and great (or not so great) wars. The course often began with the cradle of civilization – Mesopotamia – and then moved to Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. With the fall of Rome came the Middle Ages and the Crusades followed by the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and the modern era of world wars. And this history seems to fit nicely together and tells a compelling story; however, what about the rest of the world? Also, the focus of this history is very one-sided and Eurocentric. Therefore, in order to get a more balanced view of not only European history but also the history of other cultures and geographical regions during these eras, it is necessary to look beyond European sources and Europe in general. That is not to say that we should ignore the history of Western civilization but we should certainly take a more critical approach to how this history has been presented.

One of the classic time periods that historians of Western civilization have focused upon has been the Middle Ages, which is also known by many to be the “Dark Ages”. What made this period of history so “dark” and indeed were there really a bunch of uneducated people wandering around the countryside trying to avoid horribly unpleasant attacks from Germanic tribes of marauders? Well, the answer is yes, it was a little dark when compared to earlier civilizations but learning and cultural achievements weren’t exactly dead. And yes, there were some rather unpleasant semi-nomadic people running around the countryside wreaking havoc but there was also a lot more to both European history and the history of the world during this period that traditionally has

been overlooked by standard high school history courses.

So to get the whole European focus out of the way and to explain why this era of history was somewhat “dark”, here’s a synopsis of what happened.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire left a vacuum of power in Europe. This simply meant that there was no longer a large empire in power to keep up a regular army and make sure that the citizens of the empire were protected and the borders were secure. There were a number of different Germanic tribes wandering around Europe at this time and they were not known for being nice. In fact, many were quite vicious and believed in an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth type of laws and punishment. For the most part, this was completely foreign to how the Romans approached law and government.

As there was no empire left to protect the people from invasions, the wealthy had to think of some way to secure their property. These wealthy people, or lords, decided to enter into a contract with a number of either lesser nobles or knights. This feudal contract was established between the lord and his vassal whereby the lord would give the vassal a piece of land in exchange for military service (protection), grain, or labor. These knights or vassals would then do the same things with people who were lower on the social ladder than them. So a knight might exchange a small piece of his land to a farmer in exchange for grain or service on his land. The farmer would usually work for the knight 2-3 days a week, farming his land so that the knight was free to fight for the lord. These types of arrangements proved to be beneficial to all people involved as it was a symbiotic relationship (the lord got protection while the knight received land and the knight had someone to work his fields while the farmer had a plot of land to farm for himself). The lowest people in this social structure were the serfs. These people were basically ►



slaves and they could be bought and sold with the property, much like African-Americans slaves in America. This social structure was extremely rigid and it was nearly impossible to move up the ladder. If you were born a serf then you would remain a serf unless you could afford to buy your freedom, which is something that was seldom achieved.

As people began to become more secure in their surroundings, they started to move around and establish new towns and cities. People also began to focus on things other than protection, and these things included crafts such as textiles, iron and metal work, and pottery. This was also the period in which people began building grand cathedrals. These cathedrals were built in major towns for a variety of reasons: to praise God, to be a refuge for the people in hard times, and to bring business to the town. If a town had a particularly spectacular cathedral, especially one that had a holy relic that was known to be miraculous then hundreds of people would journey to the town on a pilgrimage. These travelers or pilgrims would bring in a great deal of money to the local shops and businesses of the town.

Larger towns often held sporting events in order to bring in more tourists. Medieval sports included tournaments where knights would joust and compete in sword fights for the amusement of the people and to practice their skills when there were no wars to be fought. While most of the people were illiterate during the Middle Ages, there were those who could read and write, especially religious orders of men and women. The medieval period is probably best known for being a particularly religious time period, when new orders of nuns and monks were formed. This flourishing of religious spirit and the foundation of monasteries was called the monastic movement. Monasteries and nunneries were popping up all over Europe. One of the monks' main goals was to educate the people and many monasteries established

schools to educate the youth of the town where they were located.

As you might be able to guess, the medieval period was one that almost completely revolved around religion. The Catholic Church was extremely powerful and wealthy. They controlled educational institutions, cathedrals, and even had a powerful influence on towns and kings. At this time the Catholic Church was the church of Europe – the only church of Europe – and it was centered in Vatican City (Rome) where the apostle Peter (the first pope) had lived and died and where he built the first church. The Catholic Church also believed that they were the one and only true religion. This would soon prove to be problematic as there developed a schism within the church, and when another monotheistic faith was founded in the 7th century, tensions increased.

As previously stated in the article on Islam, this faith spread slowly across the Middle East and into North Africa and Spain. However, even though people in this area were relatively slow to convert to Islam, by 900 CE most of those living under Muslim rulers in modern day Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Spain had accepted the faith. The vast majority of Muslim rulers did not push conversion on their people, with many Muslims, Christians, and Jews living together peacefully. However, this peace was relatively short lived after the leader of the Byzantine Empire asked for Pope Urban II's help in protecting Constantinople from the Seljuk Turks, which kicked off the Crusades.

Traditional history casts the Crusades as a series of holy wars that lasted from the 11th to the 13th centuries but they were more than wars over religion. As John Green points out in the Dark Ages video, had the Crusades been all about faith then they probably would have started a couple centuries before this when the Muslim empire was growing. But remember that the Muslim rulers weren't particularly concerned with



converting all of the people they governed and therefore, they weren't seen as being overly problematic for Christians or Jews. They were, of course, still viewed as believing in the "incorrect" faith but the same could be said of how the Muslims viewed Christians or how everyone viewed the Jews.

Up to the early 11th century, relations between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East were pretty chill, with Muslims welcoming Christians to the Holy Land because they made money off the pilgrims. Therefore, why would you want to disrupt a money-making enterprise? But in 1037 a new group of Muslims took over the area and they invaded the holy cities, therefore making it more difficult for the Christians to visit the holy sites. When the Eastern Roman Empire began to feel threatened, the Byzantine leader asked for help, which was a big deal because the eastern and western branches of the church did not get along. Just as the Roman Empire had divided between east (centered at Constantinople, Turkey) and west (centered at Rome, Italy), so too did the Catholic Church, with the leaders of each side claiming that they were the ones who were correct in their rites, rituals, and interpretations of the faith. Over time this bitter feud between the pope of the western branch and the patriarch of the eastern branch led to a Great Schism. This schism divided the church into the west (Roman Catholic) and east (Greek or Eastern Orthodox). Each church worships in almost exactly the same ways with mass, saints, and the Eucharist, but they remain divided. As if all of this wasn't enough trouble, there were also rival kingdoms warring it out in Europe. The kings of the numerous European kingdoms during the Middle Ages were often fighting amongst themselves over power and territory. In doing this, they were creating some havoc and general unrest, and there was a great loss of property and people when these rival kingdoms decided to fight. Pope Urban II was well aware of these problems and devised a way to possibly end the division in the Church and between

kingdoms: shift the focus away from your own issues and place them upon a common "enemy". The result was a series of political and religious wars that lasted (on and off) for two centuries. In the end, the Christians "lost" the Holy Land – although it was never really there's to begin with – and the Muslim Empire grew. While there was a massive loss of life on both sides of the fighting, the long-term effects of the wars were more positive.

During the Crusades Europeans learned more about Arabic and Muslim culture and vice versa, with both areas benefitting from prolonged contact with each other. Needless to say, war is not the best place to share ideas; however, there certainly was an exchange of both goods and ideas throughout these two centuries of warfare. Many European kingdoms were strengthened after the wars because these monarchs could consolidate their power after a large percentage of lords either died or lost their land to the king as repayment for loans made for war supplies. The Muslim empire grew substantially after the Crusades with the Ottoman Turks establishing a unified empire that extended throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and into Spain. With control of the territory that connected Asia with Europe, the Ottoman economy soared with increased trade. Italy, in particular the city-state of Venice, became extremely wealthy from the Crusades as they were responsible for most of the shipbuilding that took place during this era and then established a lucrative trade agreement with the Ottomans after the wars ended. This wealth was one of the main reasons why the Renaissance began in Italy: the Venetians, and later the Florentines, had amassed a fortune large enough to pay artists, architects, and authors such as Michelangelo and da Vinci. The trade monopoly established by the Muslim empire inspired Europeans to devise a way to cut out the middleman in their trade with Asia, which led to the Age of Exploration and the eventual "discovery" of the Americas. ►



The revival of learning and the concentration on antiquity that characterized the Renaissance came as a result of the rediscovery of ancient texts that were copied by both the Arabs and Christian monks. And finally, advances in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine made by Arab scholars were introduced to Europe, which led to changes in the way Europeans viewed the known universe (Copernicus and the heliocentric theory) and in the way we count (by using the Arabic, but really Indian, number system).

Meanwhile in China, the “Dark Ages” didn’t really exist at all. You’ll remember from the article about the fall of empires that China was in a state of disarray after the end of the Han dynasty in 220 CE. As a result of the fall of this dynasty, trade along the Silk Road routes suffered because there were no longer large empires to maintain the roads and no large army to help protect merchants and travelers. It wasn’t until the Tang dynasty rose to power in the early 7th century CE that prolonged stability returned to China and thus to the Silk Roads, especially since this was also the time period that the Muslim empire was growing in the Middle East. The Tang Empire lasted almost 300 years and during this time the Chinese expanded their territory, maintained the roads and canals that were necessary for trade, and the population soared. Agricultural innovations increased, which meant there was more food for the people and more food usually equates to an increase in population. Unfortunately, the Tang got greedy, the empire grew too big, and the emperor taxed the people too much, which is the classic recipe for the failure of empires. However, this recipe always seems to get lost over the years because rulers continually make the same mistakes over and over again! The Song dynasty (960-1279 CE) rose to power after the demise of the Tang and while the Song emperors ruled over a smaller land area, the empire still became very wealthy. During this time population doubled (thanks

again to those agricultural improvements) due to the cultivation of a new strain of rice. It was also during the reign of the Tang and Song that the Chinese went on an inventing spree: gunpowder, advances in printing, the magnetic compass, and paper money. International trade flourished during this period and internally, China had a stable government with well trained bureaucrats thanks to the extension of the use of the civil service exam and hiring based upon merit rather than money or connections. However, even with all of these accomplishments, the Song could not keep, as John Green would say ... “wait for it”... the Mongols out of China.

The Mongols had plagued the northern borders of China for a number of years as Genghis Khan organized raids and eventually took monetary pay offs from the Chinese to stop attacking them. Genghis never fulfilled his goal of conquering China; however, in 1279 his grandson Kublai Khan finally achieved what his grandfather could not. While Genghis’ Mongolian empire stretched across 11 million miles, it was almost impossible to maintain an empire of this size. So when Genghis died, it was split into four khanates with Kublai Khan taking control of the khanate that included Mongolia, Tibet, Korea, and northern China (soon to be all of China). Once Kublai Khan conquered all of China, he decided to govern from China, which was a completely novel thing to do for Mongol rulers, and established a new Mongolian-Chinese dynasty called the Yuan (1271-1368). During this period a Mongol leader controlled the area from the Persian Empire to China, which meant that the area along with Silk Road routes was stable and safe. As a result, foreign trade increased and China became very wealthy, as Chinese products were some of the most sought after goods in Afro-Eurasia. We know a great deal about some of these products and life at the Khan court from the travels of the European explorer Marco Polo, who was employed by the Khan for 17 years. Polo describes black rocks that were ►



used for heating (coal), a horned elephant (rhinoceros), and paper that was used for trade (paper currency), which were all items that were unknown to the vast majority of Europeans. Therefore, the expansion of trade under Kublai Khan generated interest in new, and often exotic, goods, which also increased the exchange of ideas such as inventions and the spread of different faiths as well as the spread of disease. It was the increase in these exchanges that led to innovation in sailing and agricultural techniques, which inspired adventurers to explore new lands and led to a huge increase in population; that is until the Black Death wiped out millions of people.

*Sources:*

*Chapman, Anne. "Landscape Teaching Unit 5.4: Mongol Empire Builders: Fiends from Hell or Culture Brokers? 1200-1400CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*Cohen, Sharon and Susan Douglass. "Landscape Teaching Unit 5.3: Consolidation of Trans-Hemispheric Networks, 1000-1250CE." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*O'Roark, Ernest and Eileen Wood. "Landscape Teaching Unit 5.5: Calamities and Recoveries, 1300-1500." World History for Us All. PDF file.*

*Big History Project. "Unit 8: Expansion and Interconnection." <https://www.bighistoryproject.com>. Web.*



## LESSON 3.4.4 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #15 The Crusades

### PURPOSE

In which John Green teaches you about the Crusades embarked upon by European Christians in the 12th and 13th centuries. Our traditional perception of the Crusades as European Colonization thinly veiled in religion isn't quite right. John covers the First through the Fourth Crusades, telling you which were successful, which were well-intentioned yet ultimately destructive, and which were just plain crazy. Before you ask, no, he doesn't cover the Children's Crusade, in which children were provoked to gather

for a Crusade, and then promptly sold into slavery by the organizers of said Crusade. While this story is charming, it turns out to be complete and utter hokey.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #15 – The Crusades - Pilgrimage or Holy War?](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library.

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider if the Crusades were an early example of western imperialism.



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## LESSON 3.4.4 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. What misconceptions about The Crusades does John dispel?
2. When and why did the First Crusade occur?
3. Why were the First Crusades more of a pilgrimage than a military operation?
4. Why, does John argue, were the Crusades NOT an early example of European colonization of the Middle East?



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5. What early struggles and successes did the First Crusades encounter?

6. What were the reasons for the Third Crusade? Was it a success?

7. What was different and as John puts it, “crazy,” about the Fourth Crusade?

8. What were the lasting legacies of the crusades?



## LESSON 3.4.4 | WATCH | Conceptual Thinking

Read the following passage and answer the questions below.

"For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ!"

*Source:*

*Bongars, Gesta Dei per Francos, 1, pp. 382 f., trans in Oliver J. Thatcher, and Edgar Holmes McNeal, eds.,*

*A Source Book for Medieval History, (New York: Scribners, 1905), 513-17*

## QUESTION

The previous passage is from Pope Urban II's speech at Council of Clermont in 1095 calling for Christians to retake the Holy Land. What reasons does Urban give for Christians fighting? What does Urban promise those who answer his call to fight?



## LESSON 3.4.5 | WATCH | Crash Course World History #227 Japan in the Heian Period

### PURPOSE

In which John Green considers what westerners call the middle ages and the lives of the aristocracy... in Japan. The Heian period in Japan lasted from 794 CE to 1185 CE, and it was an interesting time in Japan. Rather than being known for a thriving economy, or particularly interesting politics, the most important things to come out of the Heian period were largely cultural. There was a flourishing of art and literature in the period, and a lot of that culture was created by women. The Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibu was the classic piece of literature of the day, and it gave a detailed look into the way the Aristocrats of the Heian period lived. While this

doesn't give a lot of insight into the lives of daily people, it can be very valuable, and the idea of approaching history from a cultural perspective is a refreshing change from the usual military or political history that survives from so many eras.

### LINK

- [Crash Course World History #227 – Japan in the Heian Period and Cultural History](#)

Watch the following video on your own time, either at home, on your phone, or in the library:

### DIRECTIONS

As with all of the videos in the course, watch the video before class. Remember that John speaks quickly and you may benefit from having the captions turned on. If you missed something, have your teacher pause or rewind the video. As you watch the video, consider the connections between Japanese and European feudalism. Why might historians study history from a cultural perspective? What might they learn by studying the art, literature and music of a society?



## LESSON 3.4.5 | WATCH | Key Ideas – Factual

Think about the following questions as you watch the video.

1. The study of the Heian time period in Japan is the study of high culture of the elite. Why study cultural history with respect to Heian Japan as opposed to political or economic history of Japan during the same period?
2. What was Japan's first great novel?
3. What was the focus of Heian culture?
4. How was Heian aristocracy organized?



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5. How does Heian society differ from European feudalism?

6. What is significant about Heian society and historical documentation?

7. What legal protections were upper class Japanese women afforded?



## LESSON 3.4.6 | READ | Understanding the Black Death – Stanford History Education Group

### PURPOSE

This activity challenges you to read as historians from primary source documents that describe the Black Death and its spread throughout Asia and Europe. You will read, analyze and compare two primary sources created during the Black Death to try to determine the following: How did people in the 14th Century understand the Black Death?

### SOURCE

- [Understanding the Black Death](#)

### ATTACHMENTS

- Understanding the Black Death
- Graphic Organizer & Final Questions Document

### DIRECTIONS

Read primary source documents provided to you by your teachers. While reading both passages, pay particular attention to the main similarities and differences between the two examples. Following your reading, complete the graphic organizer that asks questions regarding the source documents. Once this is done, answer the final questions at the end of the activity.



## READING | Understanding the Black Death: The Report of the Paris Medical Faculty

We, the Members of the College of Physicians of Paris, have, after mature consideration and consultation on the present mortality, collected the advice of our old masters in the art, and intend to make known the causes of this pestilence more clearly than could be done according to the rules and principles of astrology and natural science; we, therefore, declare as follows:

It is known that in India and the vicinity of the Great Sea, the constellations which combated the rays of the sun, and the warmth of the heavenly fire, exerted their power especially against that sea, and struggled violently with its waters. (Hence vapours often originate which envelop the sun, and convert his light into darkness.) These vapours alternately rose and fell for twenty- eight days; but, at last, sun and fire acted so powerfully upon the sea that they attracted a great portion of it to themselves, and the waters of the ocean arose in the form of vapour; thereby the waters were in some parts so corrupted that the fish which they contained died. These corrupted waters, however, the heat of the sun could not consume, neither could other wholesome water, hail or snow and dew, originate therefrom. On the contrary, this vapour spread itself through the air in many places on the earth, and enveloped them in fog.

Such was the case all over Arabia, in a part of India, in Crete, in the plains and valleys of Macedonia, in Hungary, Albania, and Sicily. Should the same thing occur in Sardinia, not a man will be left alive, and the like will continue so long as the sun remains in the sign of Leo, on all the islands and adjoining countries to which this corrupted sea-wind extends, or has already extended, from India. If the inhabitants of those parts do not employ and adhere to the following or similar means

and precepts, we announce to them inevitable death, except the grace of Christ preserve their lives.

We are of opinion that the constellations, with the aid of nature, strive by virtue of their Divine might, to protect and heal the human race; and to this end, in union with the rays of the sun, acting through the power of fire, endeavour to break through the mist. Accordingly, within the next ten days, and until the 17th of the ensuing month of July, this mist will be converted into a stinking deleterious rain, whereby the air will be much purified. Now, as soon as this rain shall announce itself by thunder or hail, every one of you should protect himself from the air; and, as well before as after the rain, kindle a large fire of vine-wood, green laurel, or other green wood; wormwood and camomile should also be burnt in great quantity in the market- places, in other densely inhabited localities, and in the houses. Until the earth is again completely dry, and for three days afterwards, no one ought to go abroad in the fields. During this time the diet should be simple, and people should be cautious in avoiding exposure in the cool of the evening, at night, and in the morning. Poultry and water-fowl, young pork, old beef, and fat meat in general, should not be eaten; but, on the contrary, meat of a proper age, of a warm and dry, but on no account of a heating and exciting nature. Broth should be taken, seasoned with ground pepper, ginger, and cloves, especially by those who are accustomed to live temperately, and are yet choice in their diet. Sleep in the day-time is detrimental; it should be taken at night until sunrise, or somewhat longer. At breakfast one should drink little; supper should be taken an hour before sunset, when more may be drunk than in the morning. Clear light wine, mixed with a fifth or six part of water, should be used as a beverage. Dried or fresh fruits, with wine, are



not injurious, but highly so without it. Beet-root and other vegetables, whether eaten pickled or fresh, are hurtful; on the contrary, spicy pot-herbs, as sage or rosemary, are wholesome. Cold, moist, watery food in is general prejudicial. Going out at night, and even until three o'clock in the morning, is dangerous, on account of dew. Only small river fish should be used. Too much exercise is hurtful. The body should be kept warmer than usual, and thus protected from moisture and cold. Rain-water must not be employed in cooking, and every one should guard against exposure to wet weather. If it rain, a little fine treacle should be taken after dinner. Fat people should not sit in the sunshine. Good clear wine should be selected and drunk often, but in small quantities, by day. Olive oil as an article of food is fatal. Equally injurious are fasting and excessive abstemiousness, anxiety of mind, anger, and immoderate drinking. Young people, in autumn especially, must abstain from all these things if they do not wish to run a risk of dying of dysentery. In order to keep the body properly open, an enema, or some other simple means, should be employed when necessary. Bathing is injurious. Men must preserve chastity as they value their lives. Everyone should impress this on his recollection, but especially those who reside on the coast, or upon an island into which the noxious wind has penetrated.

*Source:*

*The Report of the Paris Medical Faculty, October 1348. Justice Hecher, Epidemics of the Middle Ages, translated by B.G. Babington (London: George Woodfall and Sons, 1856), 50-53.*

## DOCUMENT B: IBN AL-WARDI

"God is my security in every adversity. My sufficiency in God alone. I not God sufficient protection for His servant? Oh God, pray for our master, Muhammad, and give him peace. Save us for his sake from the attacks of the plague and give us shelter.

The Plague frightened and killed. It began in the land of darkness. Oh, what a visitor! It has been current for fifteen years. China was not preserved from it nor could the strongest fortress hinder it. The plague afflicted the Indians in India. It weighed upon the Sind. It seized with its hand and ensnared even the land of the Uzbeks. How many backs did it break in what is Transoxiana? The plague increased and spread further. It attacked the Persians...and gnawed away at the Crimea. It pelted Rum with live coals and led the outrage to Cyprus and the islands. The plague destroyed mankind in Cairo. Its eye was cast upon Egypt, and behold, the people were wide awake. It stilled all movement in Alexandria. The plague did its work like a silkworm. It tool from the tiraz factory its beauty and did to its workers what fate decreed.

Oh Alexandria; this plague is like a lion which extends its arm to you. Have patience with the fate of the plague, which leaves of seventy men only seven.

Then, the plague turned to Upper Egypt. It also sent forth its storm to Barqah. The plague attacked Gaza, and it shook Asqalan severely. The plague oppressed Acre. The source came to Jerusalem and paid the zakat [with the souls of men]. It overtook those people who fled to the al-Aqsa mosque, which stands beside the Dome of the Rock. If the door of mercy had not been opened, the end of the world would have occurred in a moment. It, then, hastened its pace and attacked the entire maritime plain. The plague strapped Sidon and descended unexpectedly upon Beirut, cunningly. Next, it directed the shooting of its arrows to Damascus. There the plague sat like a king on a throne and swayed with power, killing daily 1000 or more and decimating the population. It destroyed mankind with its pustules. May God the Most High spare Damascus to pursue its own path and extinguish



the plague's fires so they do not come close to her fragrant orchards.

Oh God, restore Damascus and protect her from insult. Its morale has been so lowered that people in the city sell themselves for a grain.

Oh God, it is acting by Your command. Lift this from us. It happens where You wish; keep the plague from us. Who will defend us against the horror other than You the Almighty? . . .

How many places has the plague entered. It swore not to leave the houses without its inhabitants. It searched them with a lamp. The pestilence caused the people of Aleppo the same disturbance. It sent out its snake and crept along. It was named the "Plague of the Ansab." It was the sixth plague to strike in Islam. To me it is the death of which our prophet warned, on him be the best prayers and peace.

Aleppo – may God protect us from this disaster – is the land of toil.

The plague became a serpent, and evil thing which kills her people with its spit.

Oh, if you could see the nobles of Aleppo studying their inscrutable books of medicine. They multiply its remedies by eating dried and sour foods. The buboes which disturb men's healthy lives are smeared with Armenian clay. Each man treated his humors and made life more comfortable. They perfumed their homes with ambergris and camphor, cyperus [sic] and sandal. They wore ruby rings and put onions, vinegar and sardines together with the daily meal. They ate less broth and fruit but ate the citron and similar things.

If you see many biers and their carriers and hear in every quarter of Aleppo the announcements of death and cries, you run from them and refuse to stay with them. In Aleppo the profits of the undertakers have greatly increased. Oh God, do not profit them. Those who sweat from carrying the coffins enjoy this plague-time. Oh God, do not let them sweat and enjoy this. They are happy and play. When they are called by a customer, they do not even go immediately. . . .

We ask God's forgiveness for our souls' bad inclination; the plague is surely part of His punishment. We take refuge from His wrath in His pleasure and from His chastisement in His restoring. They said: the air's corruption kills. I said: the love of corruption kills. How many sins and how many offenses does the crier call our attention to.

Among the things which exasperated the Muslims and brought suffering is that our enemy, the damned people of Sis, are pleased by our trial. They act as if they are safe from the plague – that there is a treaty so that it will not approach them or that they have triumphed over it. Our Lord does not create us as an enticement for those who disbelieve.

This plague is for the Muslims a martyrdom and a reward, and for the disbelievers a punishment and a rebuke. When the Muslim endures misfortune, then patience is his worship. It has been established by the Prophet that the plague-stricken are martyrs. And this secret should be pleasing to the true believer. If someone says it causes infection and destruction, say: God creates and recreates. If the liar disputes the matter of infection and tries to find an explanation, I say that the Prophet said: who infected the first? If we acknowledge the plague's devastation of the people, it is the will of the Chosen Doer. So it happened again and again. ►



I take refuge in God from the yoke of the plague. Its high explosion has burst into all countries and was an examiner of astonishing things. Its sudden attacks perplex the people. The plague chases the screaming without pity and does not accept a treasure for ransom. Its engine is far reaching. The plague enters into the house and swears it will not leave except with all of its inhabitants. "I have an order from the qadi to arrest all those in the house." Among the benefits of this order is the removal of one's hopes and the improvement of his earthly works. It awakens men from their indifference for the provisioning of their final journey.

One man begs another to take care of his children, one says goodbye to his neighbors.

A third perfects his works, and another prepares his shroud.

A fifth is reconciled with his enemies, and another treats his friends with kindness.

One is very generous; another makes friends with those who have betrayed him.

Another man puts aside his property; one frees his servants.  
One man changes his character while another mends his ways.

For this plague has captured all people and is about to send its ultimate destruction.

There is no protection today from it other than His mercy, praise be to God.

Nothing prevented us from running away from the plague except our devotion to the noble tradition. Come then, seek the aid of God Almighty for raising the plague, for He is the best helper. Oh God, we call You to raise from us the

petulance and plague. We do not take refuge in its removal other than with You. We do not depend on our good health against the plague but on You. We seek your protection, Oh Lord of creation, from the blows of the stick. We ask for Your mercy which is wider than our sins even as they are the number of the sands and the pebbles. We plead with You, by the most honored of the advocates, Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy, that You take away from us this distress. Protect us from evil and the torture and preserve us. For You are our sole support; what a perfect trustee!"

*Source:*

*Ibn al-Wardi, "An Essay on the Report of the Pestilence," 1348. Ibn al-Wardi, "An Essay on the Report of the Pestilence," in Near eastern numismatics, iconography, epigraphy, and history: Studies in honor of George C. Miles, ed. Dickran Kouymjian, translated by Michael Dols (American University of Beirut, 1974) 447-454.*



## WORKSHEET | Understanding The Black Death – Graphic Organizer

How did people in the 14th Century understand the Black Death?— Sourcing and Contextualization

	DOCUMENT A: PARIS MEDICAL FACULTY	DOCUMENT B: IBN AL-WARDI
When and where was this document written?		
Why was this document written?		
Do you think people in 1348 trusted and believed these authors?		
Where did the plague originate?		
What or who caused the plague?		

DOC A: WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE HAVE DONE TO TRY TO PREVENT OR CURE THE PLAGUE?	DOC B: HOW DID PEOPLE TRY TO PREVENT OR CURE THE PLAGUE?



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## WORKSHEET | Understanding The Black Death – Final Questions

### How did people in the 14th Century understand the Black Death? — Sourcing and Contextualization

1. How do these documents illustrate how people understood the “Black Death”?
2. List 2-3 questions you still have about the “Black Death” or how people understood it?
3. What types of documents might you examine to try and answer these questions?



## LESSON 3.4.7 | WRITE | Thought Bubble – Travel/Tourism Marketer Rebranding The Dark Ages

### PURPOSE

This activity challenges you to think critically, evaluate what you've learned throughout this unit, and to creatively write a brief marketing strategy. In a sense, you have an opportunity to rewrite a moment in history by rebranding The Dark Ages into a desirable place for travelers to visit.

### ATTACHMENTS

- Writing Rubric
- Crash Course Style Guide

### PROCESS

In every Crash Course World History video, John takes a moment to explain a concept in depth through the use of the Thought Bubble. This highly animated segment, often a minute and a half to three minutes in length (roughly 300-500 words), dives into greater detail than most of the information discussed in Crash Course videos. Imagine you are in charge of a marketing firm tasked with rebranding The Dark Ages into a desirable place for time travelers to visit. Rebranding is the process of giving a product or an organization a new image, in order to make it more attractive or successful ([Source](#)). If The Dark Ages weren't so dark, what were they?

Things to consider:

- Pick a new name for the period or build upon an existing term historians use: The Middle Ages or Medieval period.
- List and describe examples from previous lessons as to why this time period is not "dark" to entice visitors.
- Sweeten the deal by describing the strengths of the time period (technological advances or exchange of information visitors might witness; though you might want to leave out The Black Death).



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## HANDOUT | Writing Rubric | Results

Use this rubric to evaluate writing assignments. Mark scores and related comments in the scoring sheet that follows.

	ABOVE STANDARD (4)	AT STANDARD (3)	APPROACHING STANDARD (2)	BELOW STANDARD (1)	SCORE
<b>FOCUS</b> Identifies a specific topic to inform reader on concept, theory or event. Clearly states thesis with supportive topic sentences throughout document.					
<b>EVIDENCE</b> Writing demonstrates extensive research and details with a variety of sources and perspectives. Provides examples that enhance central theme and argument.					
<b>STRUCTURE</b> Cohesively links and analyzes primary sources related to the topic, and clarifies complex ideas for formal audience.					
<b>CRITICAL ANALYSIS</b> Evaluates historical claims and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.					



## HANDOUT | Crash Course Style Guide — Pro-tips for how to write an episode of Crash Course and have fun doing it.

### INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Raoul Meyer, the head writer for Crash Course Humanities and this is a, hopefully, brief introduction to how to write an episode for Crash Course the way I do. Now, I'm sure there are other ways to do it — far better writers than I have written some amazing episodes — but after writing more than 150 of 'em, I'm probably qualified to offer some tips that you may or may not use.

You might have noticed that the first paragraph I wrote sounds a bit like the opening of a Crash Course episode. If you did notice that, then I've done a good job, because in these opening paragraphs I'm trying to model the conversational style we shoot for at Crash Course, as well as give you a flavor for what a script looks like in its initial stages, which is pretty much what you've just read. I also did the most important thing that a Crash Course episode should do, but more on that in a minute.

This guide will be divided into two main sections. First I'm going to go over the process that goes into coming up with an idea for a Crash Course episode and the procedures I use to actually write one. That should be relatively short and straightforward, because, at least for me, the process is both of those things.

The second section will be tips about what writers can do, stylistically, to create episodes that have the sound and feel of Crash Course. Of course, part of the success of the episodes rests with John and Hank Green, and unless they will be hosting your episode you don't want it to sound exactly like them, but there are some things you can do to emulate,

or at least approximate, what we have done in the first four series. So let's get started with Part I.

### Part I: The Process

1. ***Start with a straightforward idea.*** For the first two Crash Course series, World History 1 and U.S. History, the ideas for each episode came from the AP curricula for those two courses, so it wasn't particularly difficult to decide what to write about. The same thing is true for Crash Course Government and Politics. For World History 2, however, I had to come up with an idea for each episode. Usually these came from single history books that I particularly like, but sometimes they came from multiple books.

Episodes based on a single book are easier to write because a good book will have a relatively clear argument that can serve as the basis for what you want to say. The episode on the Columbian Exchange in Crash Course World History 1 is a good example of this type of essay, as is the episode on Drought and Famine in the second World History series.

The most important thing about your idea is this: you must know what it is you want to teach and explain to your viewers why it is important that they should learn what you are teaching them. This must be clear to you so that you can make it clear to them.

2. ***Identify the "typical view" on the topic.*** Once you have identified the topic you want to write about and what



you want to say about it, the next step is figuring out what people would commonly know about this topic. I'll say more about this in the style section, but many Crash Course episodes build off the notion that there's an accepted view of history that people probably have, even if they don't know it, and then there's another view that they might not have considered. Many of my favorite Crash Course episodes play off this idea.

The most obvious example of this is the World History episode on the Greeks and Persians, which starts from the premise that the Greeks winning the Persian Wars was a good thing and then flips it on its head. In order to make the opposite argument, I needed to present some information about the Persian Empire and also provide an interpretation of the Greeks that puts them in a less favorable, or at least more problematic light. Pointing out the problems with commonly held views is something we try to do a lot at Crash Course.

3. **Make an outline.** Having figured out the main argument you intend to make in your episode, make an outline of the major points you want to make. Sometimes your episode will be mainly informational, in which case the outline will resemble a list. Other times you may want to lay out the different sides of the argument in relative detail. This depends a lot on your own writing process.
4. **Do your research.** The amount of research you need to do will depend on your familiarity with the topic and its complexity. With most of the episodes in the first two seasons I didn't do a ton of research because the topics tracked the AP curricula pretty closely and I had taught most of them for multiple years. But for World History 2, I read at least one book for each episode and often read more than one.

It's much easier to base an episode around a single book, but sometimes, as with the episode on Historical Interpretation and the Rise of the West, or the two episodes on the origins of World War I, a single book just won't cut it. It's really important to budget your time appropriately based on how much reading you are going to need to do.

5. **Start writing.** Once you've done steps 1-4, you're ready to write. I find that if I have a good outline and know what I'm thinking of doing, it takes me about 3-5 hours to write an episode. But, like A.J. Liebling, I can write better than anyone faster than me and faster than anyone better than me. At least I can write Crash Course scripts faster than anyone I know. But probably not better.
6. **Let it marinate.** Once you've finished, assuming that you have the time, let your script sit for at least a day before you edit it. Distance is a good thing. Then edit the script and figure out where you think the Thought Bubble will fit. Don't worry so much about the visuals; the gang at ThoughtCafe will handle them, probably better than you could. Certainly better than I could.

So that's basically the process I follow. I know it's not really a step-by-step guide, but everyone writes differently and what works for me might not work the same way for you. So now, let's move on to my not-so-secret pro-tips in Part 2. ►



## Part 2: Crash Course Style

There are a lot of videos out there and most of them have one thing in common: their style derives largely from their host. Crash Course is no exception in this. The way the videos look and sound has a great deal to do with the personalities of the original hosts, John and Hank. I have been lucky in that my writing style meshes pretty well with John's personality, and the result has been an approach that I would say combines seriousness with silliness, one in which we honor the material and the study of history while always, always recognizing that the view we are presenting is only one of many possible interpretations. If there is one word that encompasses the Crash Course approach, I'd say it's humility.

That being said, here are some things to keep in mind that will help you make your script as Crash Course-y as possible.

1. Assume that your audience is smart and wants to hear what you have to say. It's a good idea to address your audience as though they are familiar with the topic you are discussing. In setting up the premise that there is an accepted view of the topic and that you are trying to present an interpretation that is slightly – or maybe more than slightly – different, speak to your audience as though they already know the accepted view, because they probably do. One way to accomplish this is by addressing the audience directly using the word “you.” If you watch the videos, you'll probably notice that the host often introduces an idea by saying something like, “Now, you probably know that ...” Kind of like I just did right there.
2. Use qualifiers like, “probably,” “maybe,” and “kind of,” and if you are making a claim without a specific authority to back it up, say, “many people believe,” or “some people think.” This is pretty important, because one of the things Crash Course tries to avoid is setting itself up as the authority on anything. The Humanities is largely about interpretation and we strive to make that visible in our episodes. Not only does this acknowledge our humility in the face of the work of real historians, but it points out that, like our viewers, we are learning, too.
3. Try to be funny, but make yourself the object of the jokes more often than not. Part of our charm, assuming that we have any charm, is that Crash Course hosts are self-deprecating. There's a place in Crash Course for snarky humor, but it should be used sparingly, and snide remarks should be aimed at the powerful rather than the powerless. That's why it's ok for you to point out that the government is often ineffective or to shine a light on patriarchy where it exists, but also why we don't make fun of things that aren't funny, like slavery.
4. In general, try to make jokes that are timeless, recognizing that our YouTube videos have a long tail and that humor that is specifically related to one celebrity or event might not make sense a year or even six months down the road. Also it's really hard to know which trends are going to last. The best example of this is the episode where we make a joke out of both Kim Kardashian, who will probably be a comprehensible punch-line for a while to come, and Mike “the Situation” Sorrentino, who many viewers might have to Google even now. Similarly, it's probably ok to use “Google” as a verb in 2015, but who knows what we'll be using to search the Internet in 2020.
5. Complex sentences with multiple clauses, especially relative ones – especially those that use asides



- are good. Stylistically, sentences with piles of clauses give Crash Course its rhythm, but they also provide an analog to the way people, at least the ones we know and admire, think about important topics. Rarely do we arrive at conclusions in a completely linear fashion, and the twists and turns of our phrasing demonstrate our thought processes to the viewers. Remember, we want the viewers to engage in thinking about history with us rather than simply provide them with an interpretation that they are expected to know. They probably have had enough experience with that already. Also, don't worry so much about consistency of pronouns, or even tenses since you can overcome grammar inconsistencies with your reading.
6. Be mindful of the order of your clauses. When you are trying to show two sides of an issue with two clauses separated by a “but” it may be that the second clause is the one that gets remembered and the result is that you might seem biased in favor of what you put in that clause. You might think you are being completely fair and showing both sides on paper, but on camera it appears that you have a definite bias.
  7. Write conversationally... But you knew that already.
  8. Last, but not at all least, try to walk the fine line between ironic detachment – the argot of much of the writing that appears online and increasingly in print – and earnestness. One of John and Hank's greatest strengths is the genuine love of learning that they exude and the joy they take in finding out something new and sharing it with the world. This is the attitude that is summed up in their version of nerdiness and is the essence of the mixture of fun and seriousness that is what Crash Course, and learning, should be.
  9. Oh yeah, and last for real: try to keep your script at about 2000 words, more or less.

This became clear to me in our episode on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one that was certain to inflame both sides of the hyphen. After careful editing, I was reasonably sure that we had done a good job of not offending anybody, or at least offending everybody equally, and not coming off as either pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian. But when I watched the video I had a nagging sense that by mentioning the casualties suffered by Palestinians in the second clause, after describing those suffered by Israelis, we had somehow given more weight to the Palestinians' cause. This was not at all intended, and it's something to watch out for when you write.



## LESSON 3.4.8 | CLOSING | EQ Notebook

### PURPOSE

At the start of the unit, you examined the essential question without much to go on. Now that the unit is almost over, let's revisit the essential question.

This time, cite specific passages and evidence from the content in the unit that provide insights into answering the driving question.

### ATTACHMENT \_\_\_\_\_

- Essential Questions Unit 3 Notebook Worksheet

### PROCESS

Think about this question: Is the world better off for having experienced the Columbian Exchange? Use the EQ Notebook – Unit 3 to respond to this question as best as you can.

Be prepared to talk about these ideas with your class.